CORPSE PRINCESS

YOSHIICHI AKAHITO

Corpse Princess

CORPSE PRINCESS

1

OMINOUS DEATH OMEN (NICKNAME)

Colloquial term used among Shikabane with saga to describe humans who tend to draw other humans to sites of death. These marked individuals are born with a strong connection to "death" itself and witness omen-like hallucinations. Owing to their nature, they're more likely to encounter Shikabane, and they tend to have relatively short life-spans.

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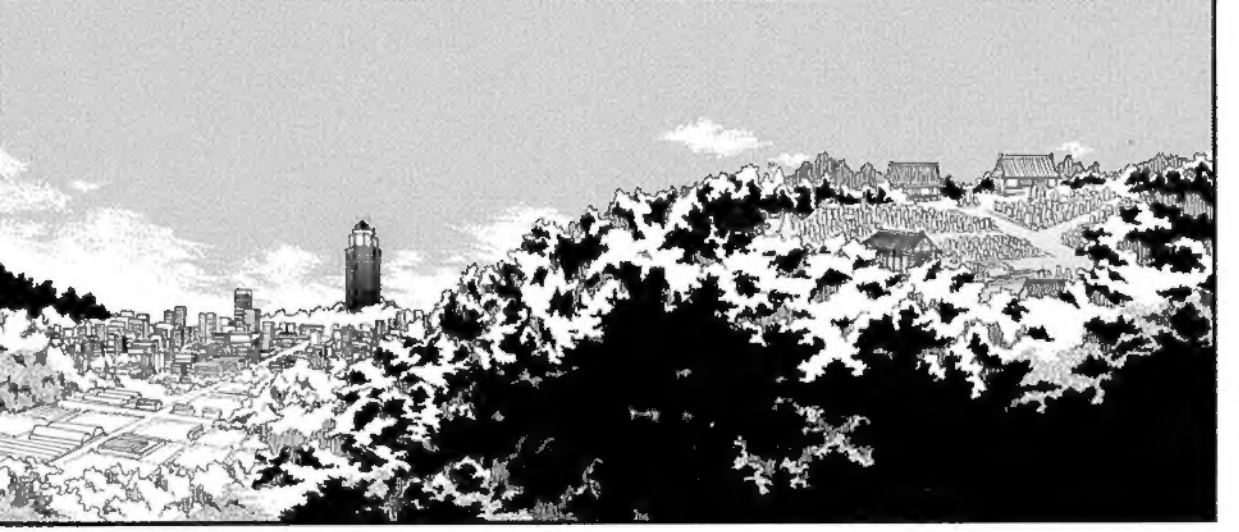
DEATH 45:
OMINOUS DEATH OMEN

CORPSE PRINCESS 11



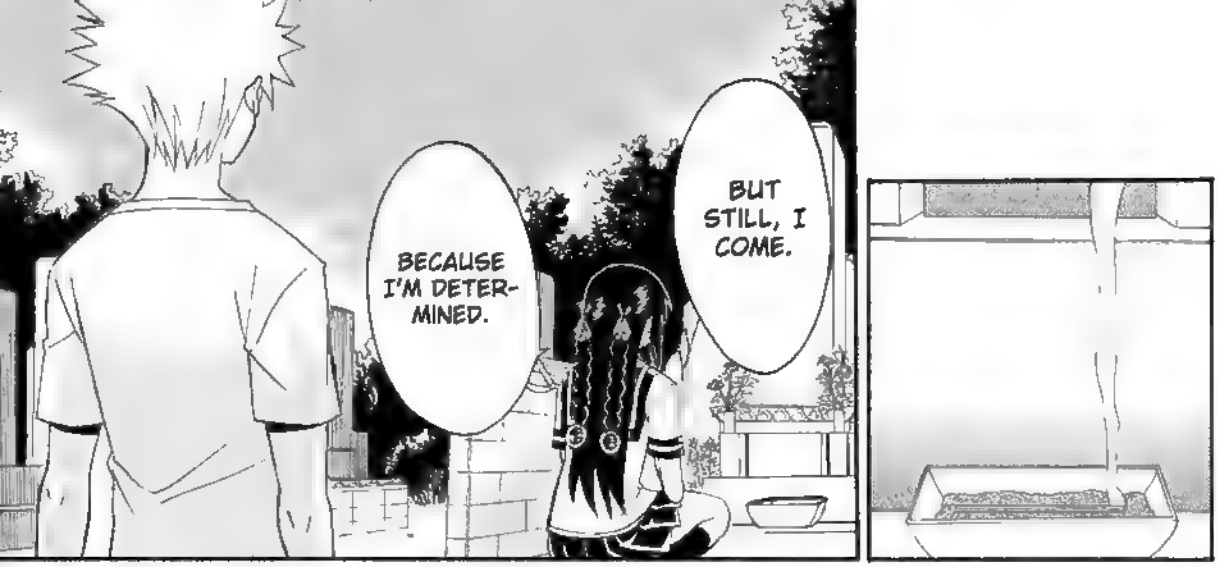
KOUGON SECT MEMORIAL CEMETERY
光言宗祈慰霊園

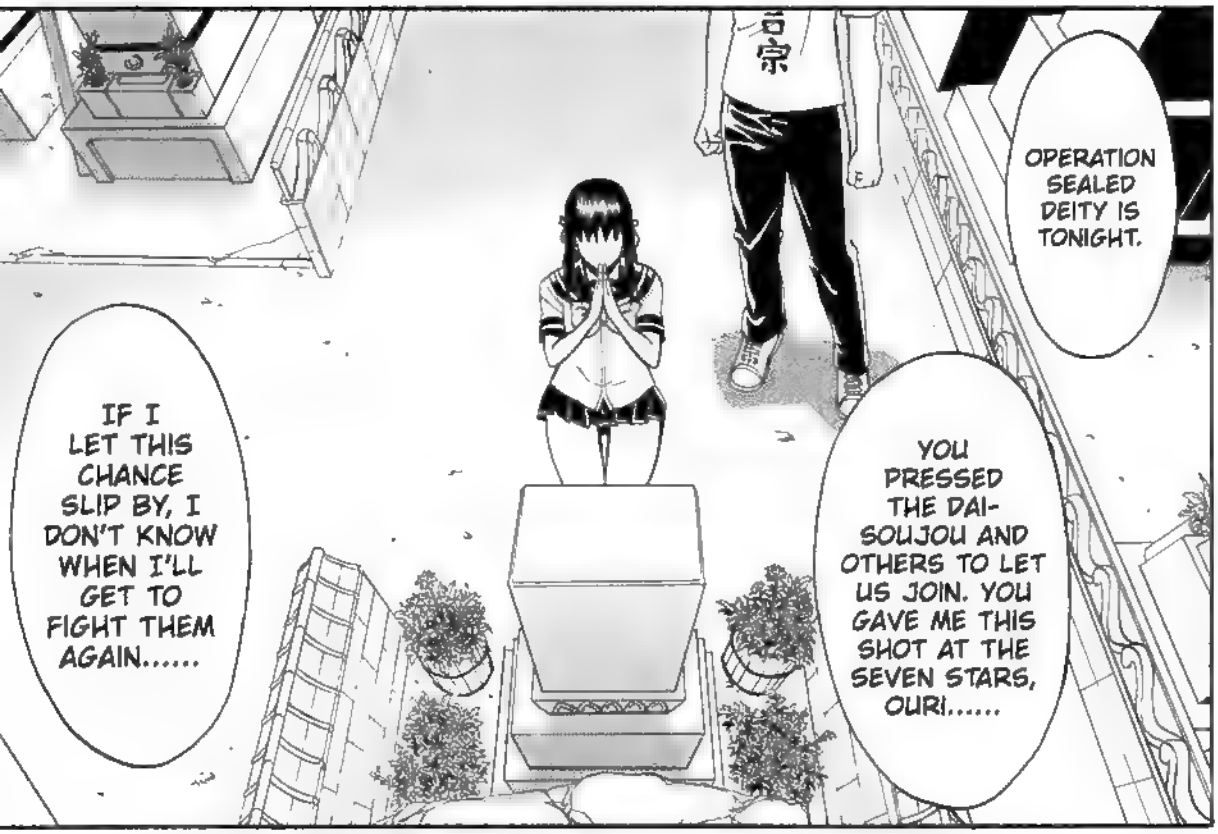
HOSHI-MURA-SAN, IS THIS .....?
光言宗
KOUGON SECT
STEP

.....

HOSHIMURA FAMILY GRAVE
星村家代々之墓

STONE: 1936-1945


BUT STILL, I COME.
BECAUSE I'M DETER-MINED.


OPERATION SEALED DEITY IS TONIGHT.
IF I LET THIS CHANCE SLIP BY, I DON'T KNOW WHEN I'LL GET TO FIGHT THEM AGAIN.....
YOU PRESSED THE DAI-SOUJOU AND OTHERS TO LET US JOIN. YOU GAVE ME THIS SHOT AT THE SEVEN STARS, OURI.....

THIS IS MY WAY OF SHOWING THAT DETERMINATION.
NO REGRETS NOW.

TONIGHT, I'M GOING TO...
...FULFILL THOSE LINGERING REGRETS OF MINE!!

I'LL BEAT THE SEVEN STARS .....!!

MM-HM.
I'M COUNTING ON YOU.
YEAH..... I FEEL THE SAME WAY.

...
GULP

DON'T THROW AWAY YOUR LIFE FOR NOTHING.
SURVIVE SO THAT YOU AND THE GIRL CAN EXPIRE IN A WAY BEFITTING THE COMING OF THE SEVEN STARS.

IT'S NOON .....
ONLY NINE HOURS UNTIL THE MISSION STARTS, HUH?
YUP.
DONG
DING
DONG
DING
WHAA—? WHERE'S THIS COMING FROM!?
SCHOOL? AT A TIME LIKE.....?
EX-ACTLY.
EH!?
...HOW ABOUT YOU GO TO SCHOOL FOR A WHILE?
OURI... IN THE MEAN-TIME...
BECAUSE IT'S A TIME LIKE THIS...
...I DON'T WANT YOU...
...TO HAVE ANY REGRETS.
...

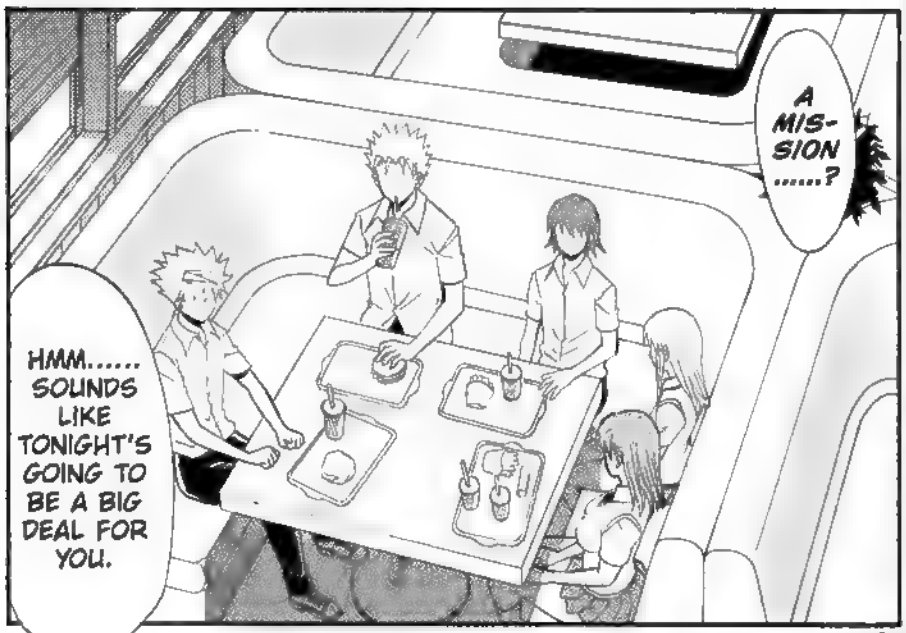
MITSUBOSHI

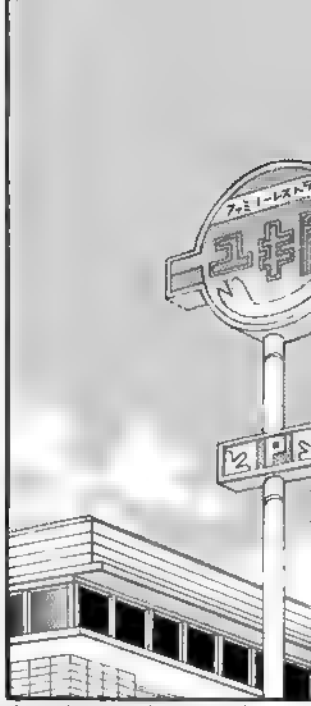
.....
HOSHIMURA-SAN..... WHY'D YOU LOOK AT ME LIKE THAT AS YOU SAID IT.....?
...AP-PAR-ENTLY.
BECAUSE SHE DOESN'T WANT ME HAVING ANY REGRETS .....

IT'S OKAY..... WE'LL MEET UP AGAIN BEFORE THE TEAM CONVENES.....
I NEED A LITTLE MORE TIME HERE.
星村家代々之墓

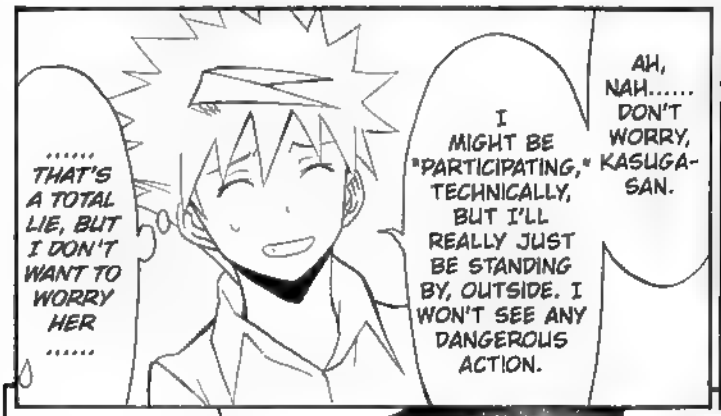
...HOSHIMURA-SAN..... WAS NEVER IMAGINING THAT THERE'D BE AN AFTER" .....?
COULD IT BE...

OURI-KUN?
OURI?
... HUH?
I MEAN, I KNOW THE SEVEN STARS ARE GONNA BE TOUGH TO BEAT, BUT STILL.....
BUT .....
GRAB
HUH...? WHAT ABOUT SCHOOL.....?
..OUCH.
!?
YOU GUYS .....!
GRIND
SNAP
AHHH
STOP IT...
AHH ...
BUT WHAT'S THE BIG IDEA, DROPPING OFF THE FACE OF THE EARTH AND MAKING US WORRY!!?
WE FIRST-YEARS'VE GOT HALF-DAYS AT A TEMPORARY FACILITY, AND THE SECOND- AND THIRD-YEARS'RE TAKING CLASSES AT ANOTHER SCHOOL ALTOGETHER !!
IT GOT TOTALLY OBLITERATED TWO WEEKS AGO!!
SCHOOL!? WHAT SCHOOL!?
GYAHHHHHHHH!



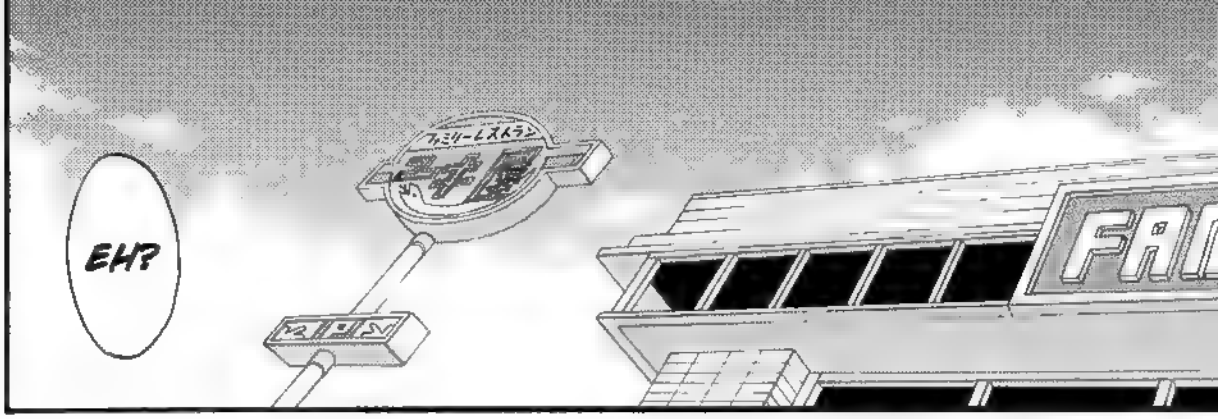


SIGN: FAMILY RESTAURANT YUKIYA


AH, NAH..... DON'T WORRY, KASUGA-SAN.
I MIGHT BE "PARTICIPATING," TECHNICALLY, BUT I'LL REALLY JUST BE STANDING BY, OUTSIDE. I WON'T SEE ANY DANGEROUS ACTION.
..... THAT'S A TOTAL LIE, BUT I DON'T WANT TO WORRY HER .....

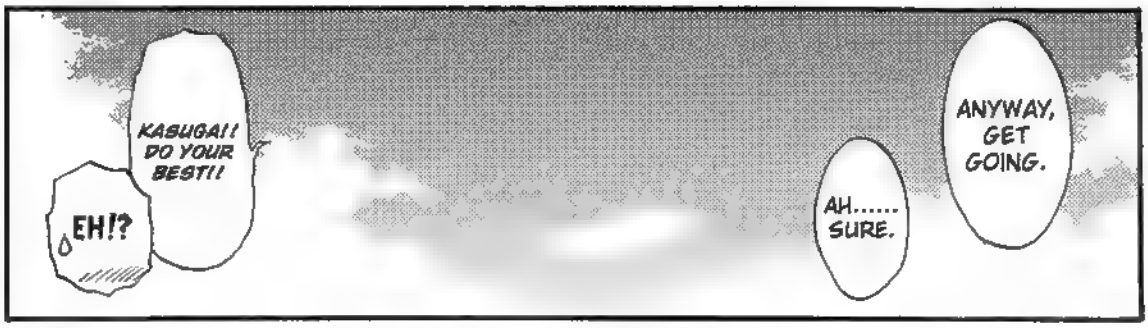
I'VE NEVER HEARD OF THAT SORT OF FORTUNE-TELLING!!
ANYONE WOULD DIE FROM THAT.
IF YOU'RE TELLING THE TRUTH, YOU'LL LIVE. IF YOU LIED, YOU DIE. IT'S AN ANCIENT METHOD OF JUDGMENT .....
GYAHH
WE'LL PLUG UP YOUR EYES, NOSE, AND MOUTH WITH A LARGE ORDER'S WORTH OF FRIES.
OHH.....? A BIT OF "FRYTUNE-TELLING" WILL TELL US IF THAT'S A LIE OR NOT.

EVERY BEAUTY IN THIS WORLD IS ANOTHER REASON FOR ME TO LIVE...
...SO IT'S YOUR JOB TO BRING HER HOME SAFELY, OURI.
AND THEN, YOU CAN INTRO-DUCE US.
YOU .....
!
'COS IF YOU MAKE IT OUT, THAT MEANS THAT RAVEN-HAIRED CUTIE WITH THIGHS FOR MILES WILL BE OKAY TOO.
RIGHT..... I THOUGHT WE WERE HAVING A MOMENT. SILLY ME .....
SHOCK
I WON'T INTRODUCE YOU, THOUGH.
YOU'RE RIGHT..... THAT'S TRUE.
..... RIGHT.


EH?

WE'VE GOT STUFF TO DO.
COME ON. JUST DO IT.
GRIND GRIND GRIND GRIND

YOU WANT US TWO TO LEAVE?
WHY?

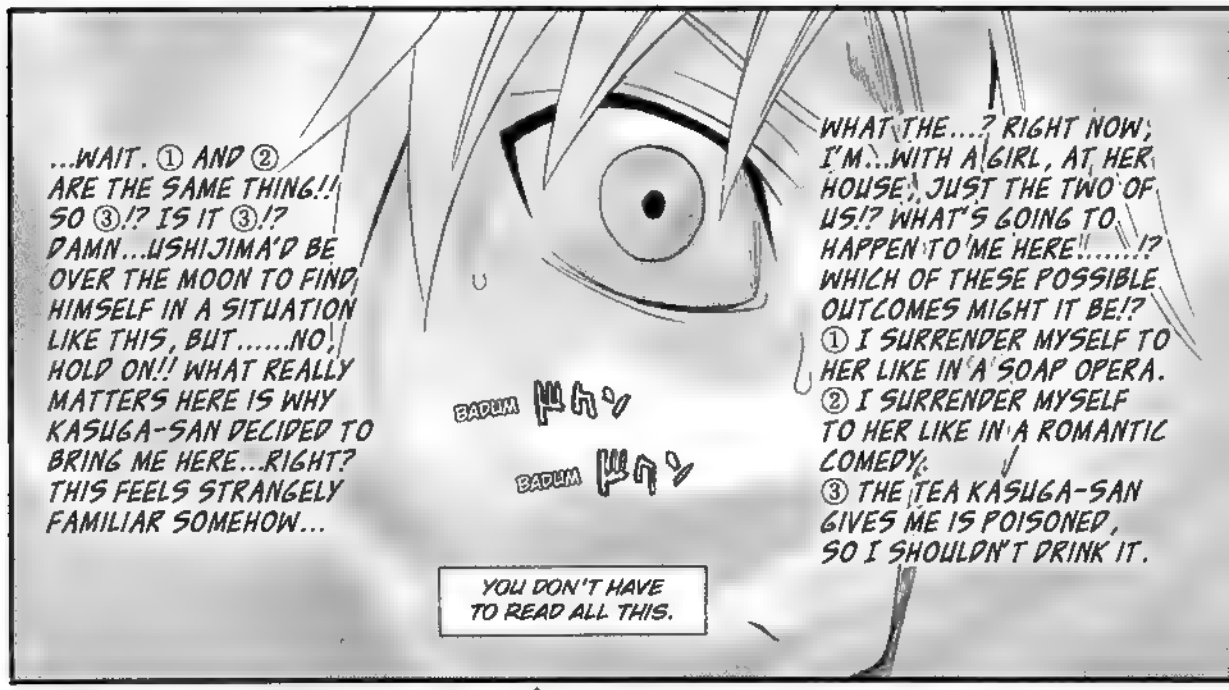

KASUGA!! DO YOUR BEST!!
EH!?
AH..... SURE.
ANYWAY, GET GOING.

HMM?
ARE YOU..... FREE?
U-UMM, OURI-KUN...

.....
WHAT WAS THAT ABOUT ...?
THOSE GUYS...

FREE?
IT'S FIVE NOW..... GOTTA MEET UP BY EIGHT.
YEAH... GUESS SO.
I-IN THAT CASE .....
... THERE'S... SOME-WHERE I'D LIKE YOU TO GO...WITH ME.....
AH ...
OKAY. SURE.
801
KASUGA 春日
..... WAIT, KASUGA-SAN.....
THIS IS..... YOUR HOUSE, ISN'T IT?
YES..... IT'S OKAY.
MY PARENTS ARE STILL AT WORK.

JUST HANG ON A MINUTE.
I'LL HAVE TEA READY SOON.
.....
THAT'S NOT IT!!
YOU REALIZE HOW UNBELIEVABLY CRAZY THIS IS, DON'T YOU!?

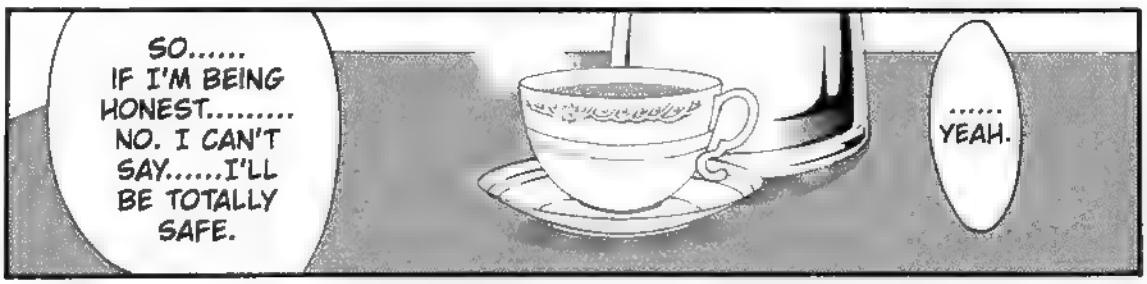

WHAT THE...? RIGHT NOW, I'M...WITH A GIRL, AT HER HOUSE, JUST THE TWO OF US!? WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN TO ME HERE.....!? WHICH OF THESE POSSIBLE OUTCOMES MIGHT IT BE!?
① I SURRENDER MYSELF TO HER LIKE IN A SOAP OPERA.
② I SURRENDER MYSELF TO HER LIKE IN A ROMANTIC COMEDY.
③ THE TEA KASUGA-SAN GIVES ME IS POISONED, SO I SHOULDN'T DRINK IT.
BADUM ドゥン
BADUM ドゥン
...WAIT. ① AND ② ARE THE SAME THING!! SO ③!? IS IT ③!? DAMN...USHIJIMA'D BE OVER THE MOON TO FIND HIMSELF IN A SITUATION LIKE THIS, BUT.....NO! HOLD ON!! WHAT REALLY MATTERS HERE IS WHY KASUGA-SAN DECIDED TO BRING ME HERE...RIGHT? THIS FEELS STRANGELY FAMILIAR SOMEHOW...
YOU DON'T HAVE TO READ ALL THIS.

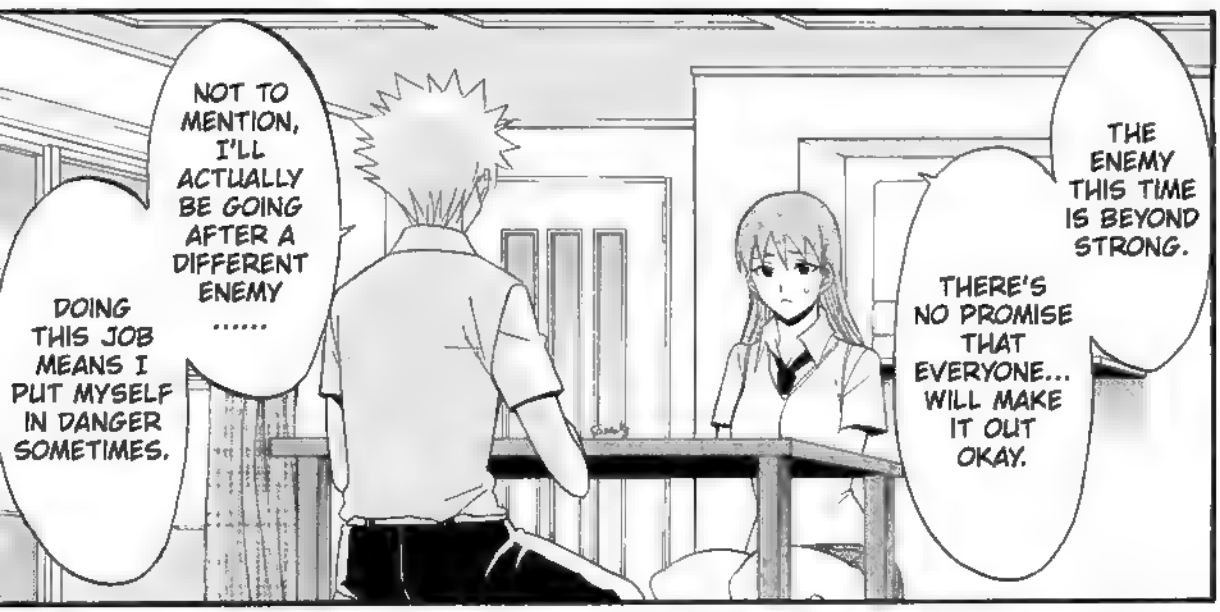
↳ OURI

THIS JOB OF YOURS TONIGHT .....
ARE YOU... REALLY SURE IT WON'T BE DANGER-OUS?
!

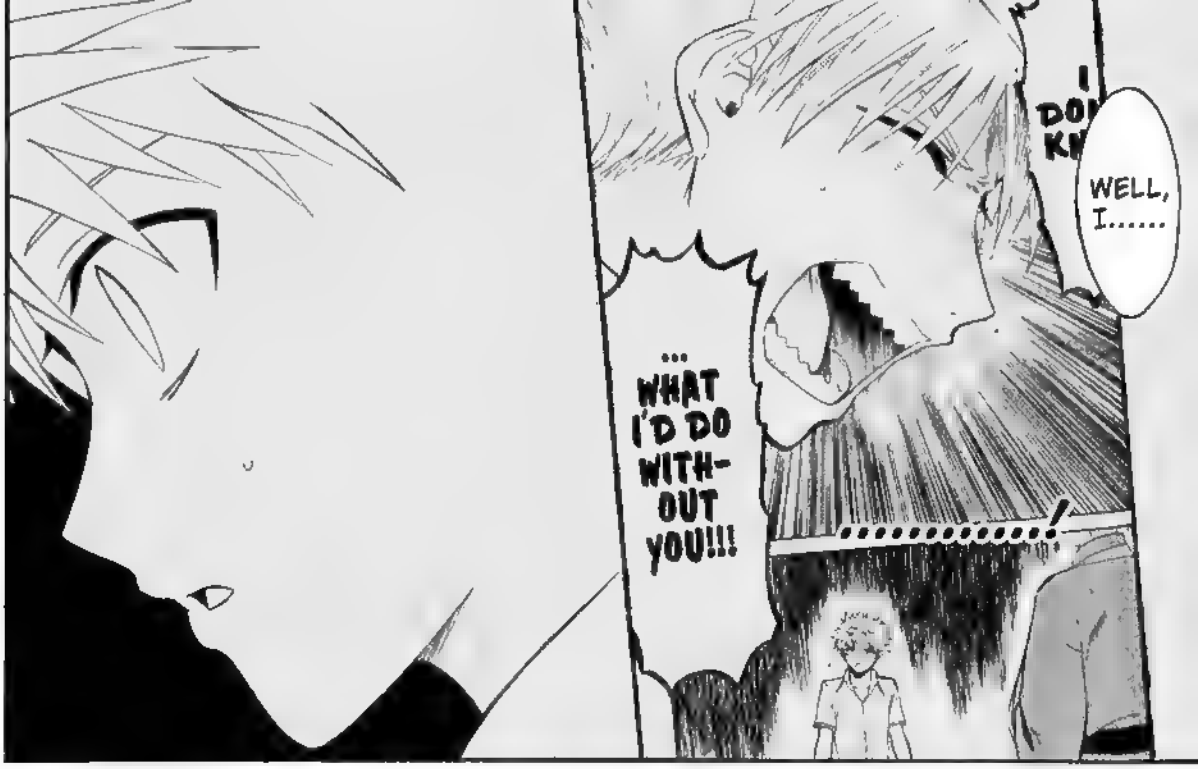
OURI-KUN.
SHOCK
YES!?

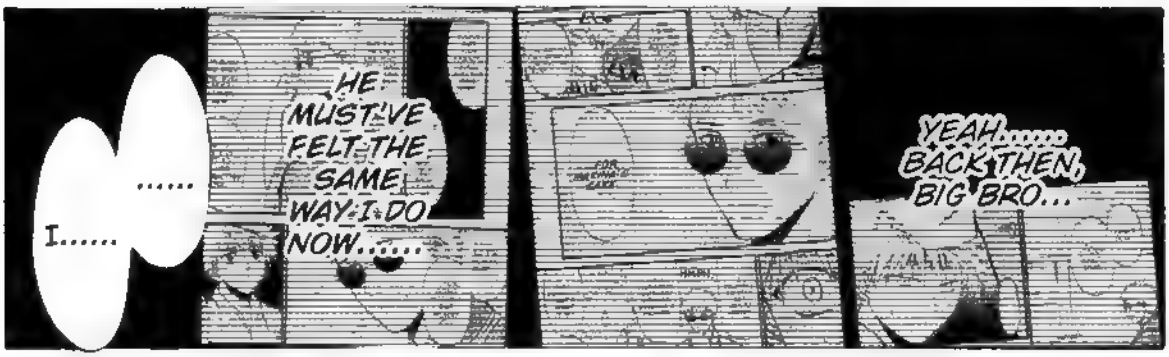
...
...GOING OFF TO FIGHT SOMEONE LIKE THAT MR. WHISPER WHO ATTACKED US, AREN'T YOU? BUT...A BUNCH OF THEM .....?
YOU'RE .....


SO..... IF I'M BEING HONEST..... NO. I CAN'T SAY.....I'LL BE TOTALLY SAFE.
..... YEAH.


DOING THIS JOB MEANS I PUT MYSELF IN DANGER SOMETIMES.
NOT TO MENTION, I'LL ACTUALLY BE GOING AFTER A DIFFERENT ENEMY .....
THERE'S NO PROMISE THAT EVERYONE... WILL MAKE IT OUT OKAY.
THE ENEMY THIS TIME IS BEYOND STRONG.

WHY DO YOU HAVE TO GO AND SEEK IT OUT, OURI-KUN...!?
BUT WHY ...?


WELL, I.....
...WHAT I'D DO WITH-OUT YOU!!!


I..... .....
HE MUST'VE FELT THE SAME WAY I DO NOW.....
YEAH..... BACK THEN, BIG BRO...

...

..... BUT I'LL BE FINE.

...I CAN'T GIVE UP..... GOTTA STAY DETERMINED.
EVEN IF I KNOW..... HOW MUCH SHE'S WORRIED ABOUT ME.....
IT'S... BECAUSE I WANT TO FIGHT AT HOSHIMURA-SAN'S SIDE... I GUESS.

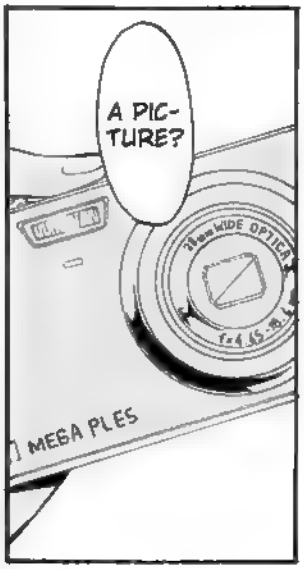
MY DETERMINATION... IS ALL ABOUT PROTECTING HOSHIMURA-SAN AND EVERYONE ELSE.....
I PROMISE.
YOU'LL SEE ME AGAIN.

OKAY ...
IT'S A PROMISE.

SNIFFLE

...I'D LIKE TO HAVE A PHOTO..... OF YOU AND ME, OURI-KUN.....
BUT... MORE THAN THAT .....

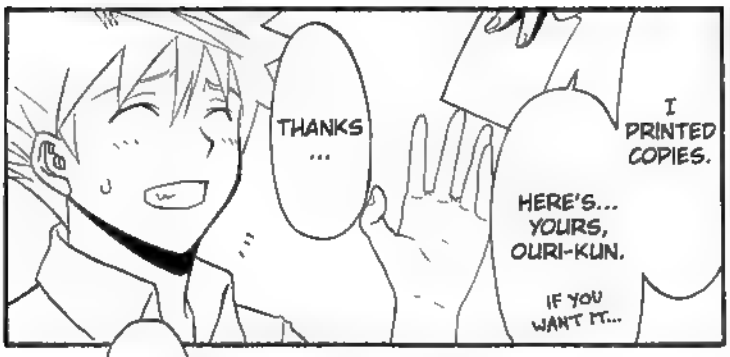
I WANT TO BE AN ANIMAL PHOTOG-RAPHER SOMEDAY.
YES... UMM, IT'S...A HOBBY OF MINE.

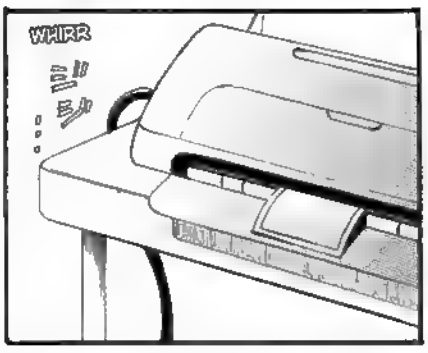

A PIC-TURE?
MEGA PLES

TH-THAT'S NOT TRUE AT ALL!!
OKAY, SURE..... I'M A LITTLE PLAIN, THOUGH .....

SCRATCH
...

SNAP


THANKS ...
I PRINTED COPIES.
HERE'S... YOURS, OURI-KUN.
IF YOU WANT IT...


WHIRR

!
WHOOSH
EH.....?

S-SORRY, BUT I'D BETTER GET GOING.
EH?
AH, OKAY. UMM..... WELL THEN...
SORRY.
SLAM
WHAT'S THE MATTER?
?
.....NOTHING.
AH...
?
CLANG
CLANG
CLANG
THIS PICTURE... WHY IS IT LIKE THIS .....?
THIS IS TOO CRAZY..... WHY...? WHY THIS.....?
CRUMPLE
CLANG
NO WAY .....
NO FREAKING WAY!!
CLANG
STEP
STEP
STEP

WHAT'S GOING ON!?
WHY.....? WHAT IS THAT.....?
TMP
SEEMS LIKE KASUGA-SAN DIDN'T NOTICE IT.....
BADUM
TMP
TMP
TMP
IN OTHER WORDS ...
...THERE'S A GOOD CHANCE THAT DEATH WILL PAY THAT GIRL A VISIT SOON.....
WHAT'S REFLECTED THERE IS A MANIFESTATION OF THE AURA OF DEATH THAT SURROUNDS SOME HUMANS.
!?
JOLT
TMP
THAT'S A "SHADOW OF DEATH."

IS THAT BECAUSE .....
...THE BARRIER PROTECTING YAMA CITY IS GONE ...!?
WELL...
...THE SAME IS TRUE FOR MOST OF THE HUMANS IN THIS TOWN.....
WHAT .....?
MAYBE ...?
TMP
HEH HEH...
OR PERHAPS..... THE EFFECT IN THE PHOTO WAS YOUR INFLUENCE...
TMP
TMP
...HMM, "OMINOUS DEATH OMEN"?
!!?

BUT..... YOU SHOULD REJOICE.
THE SHADOW OF DEATH DID NOT APPEAR OVER YOU.
THAT MEANS IT IS NOT YET YOUR FATE TO DIE... HEH-EH.

WHAT'RE YOU...
... TRYING TO SAY!? THAT .....
THAT "OMINOUS DEATH OMEN" THING YOU'RE ALWAYS TALKING ABOUT..... WHAT'S THAT?

COME. OR DO YOU NOT WANT TO KNOW?
TO KNOW... ABOUT YOURSELF .....?
LEAP
AH...
STEP
HEH HEH .....

HEH HEH..
JUST A BIT FARTHER.
H-
HEY, WAIT UP!!
DASH
.....! DAMMIT !!
ONCE YOU BECOME BETTER ABLE TO PERCEIVE OUR FORM AND VOICE...
ONCE YOU FEEL DEATH'S TOUCH MORE AND MORE.....
HAA..
HAA.
SLIDE
ガシャ
...THEN YOU'LL REMEMBER... EVERYTHING .....
HAA.
TMP
TMP
HAA.

MEOW.

WHAT'S WRONG?
COME CLOSER, WON'T YOU?

!!
ヒナイチャン
WARPED

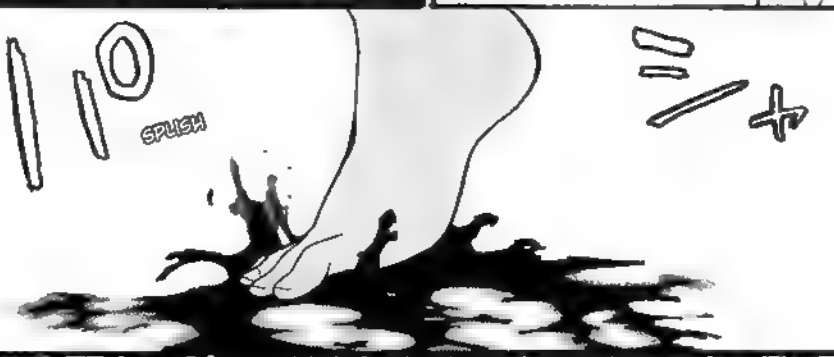
IT'S A MUTATED..... SHIKABANE!?
A CORPSE...!? NO.....

...THE SIDE OF THE DEAD.
CLOSER TO OUR SIDE...

...SEATED ATOP OUR MASS OF BLOOD AND BODIES, DID YOU NOT?
YOU BEGAN...

THEN... YOU'LL REMEMBER US.....
COME, OURI.
FEEL DEATH'S EMBRACE

...!!
WHAT THE ...?


SPLISH

SPLASH
SPLASH

HEH HEH...
THEY'RE BACK.
FADE
TURN

UWAHH
.....
OOH
.....
SPLASH
SPLISH
I'VE..... SEEN HER BEFORE.....
.....NO.
IT'S A...
...
GIRL ...?
OOH.
EH !?
HUH?
IT'S GONE !?
VANISHED
CA—
.....
CAT
...

LOOM
CAT.
!?
SQUEEZE
...!?
WHA—
.....?
SQUEEZE
THIS...
POWER.....
THUD
GRAB
COINCIDENCE OR NOT..... THIS IS INTERESTING.
OHH ...?
STEP

MEETING YOU NOW, ON TODAY OF ALL DAYS...

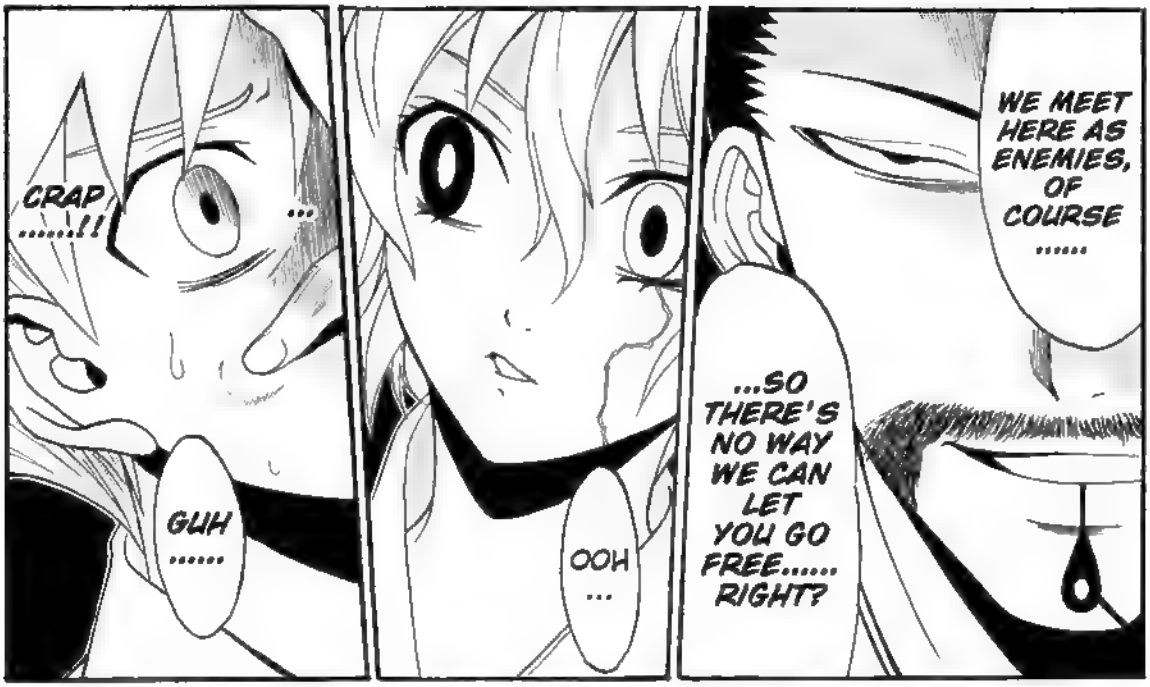
I REMEMBER !! .....
.....I...

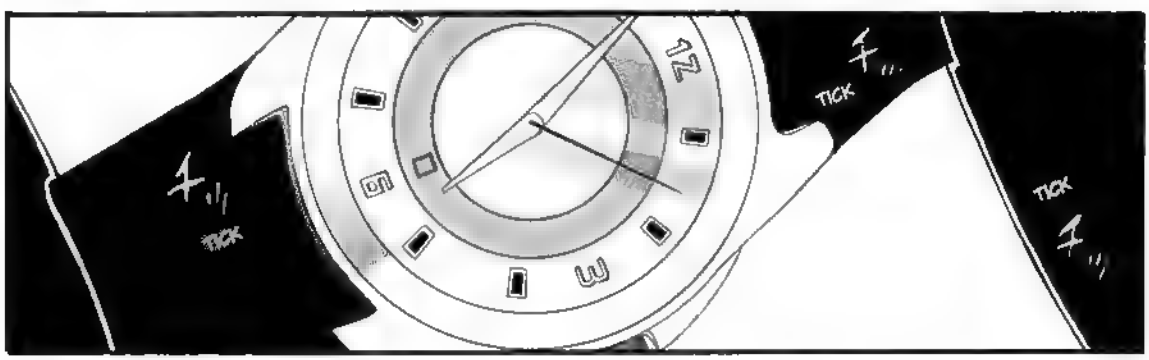
HAZAMA!!
... MR. ...
... BUG .....

HOKUTO...!! OF THE SEVEN STARS .....!!
SEVEN STARS .....!!
WHY ARE THEY HERE .....?
SQUEEZE
SQUEEZE

...THIS GIRL.....

WHAT SHALL WE DO?
HEH HEH HEH .....
..... WELL ...

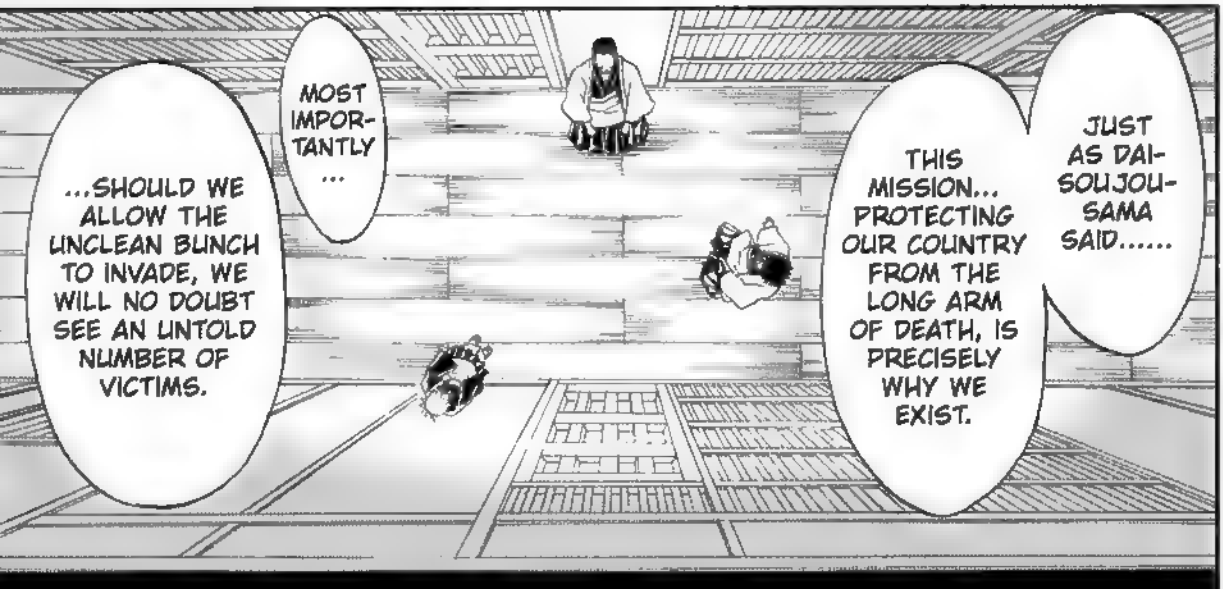

CRAP .....!! ...
GUH .....
OOH ...
...SO THERE'S NO WAY WE CAN LET YOU GO FREE..... RIGHT?
WE MEET HERE AS ENEMIES, OF COURSE .....


TICK
TICK
TICK

FLOW
FLOW
FLOW
FLOW
SPLASH
SPLASH
FSSHH
FSSHH
FSSHH
PRES-
ENTLY
...
AS THIS DISASTER ONLY JUST OCCURRED, WE ARE ONLY 30% DONE WITH THE CLEANUP EFFORTS.
...THE SPRING AT THE HEAD TEMPLE POLLUTED BY THE FOUNDER'S CURSE IS BEING DRAINED, AND THE RUNOFF IS BEING PURIFIED .....
HOW'RE PREPARATIONS FOR TONIGHT, SHIRAE?
SCRATCH
WOULDN'T EXPECT IT TO ALL BE FIXED SO SOON.
YEAH... THAT'S WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THE ENEMY GETS TO RUN WILD.....

I'VE RECEIVED WORD FROM ALL PARTICIPATING PROTECTORS THAT THEY'RE HEADED OUR WAY.
NO DELAYS ON THAT FRONT.
THEY SHOULD BE ARRIVING SHORTLY.

AT LONG LAST.
.....
MM-HM.


...SHOULD WE ALLOW THE UNCLEAN BUNCH TO INVADE, WE WILL NO DOUBT SEE AN UNTOLD NUMBER OF VICTIMS.
MOST IMPOR-TANTLY ...
THIS MISSION... PROTECTING OUR COUNTRY FROM THE LONG ARM OF DEATH, IS PRECISELY WHY WE EXIST.
JUST AS DAI-SOUJOU-SAMA SAID.....

I HATE HAVING TO PLACE THE BURDEN ON YOU ALONE, BUT...
...GOOD LUCK, UMEHARA.

YEAH, I GOT IT, SENPAI.
WE GOTTA PROTECT PEACE AND NORMALITY FOR THE PEOPLE OF THIS COUNTRY.
IF IT ALL CRUMBLES, I WON'T GET TO COLLECT AWESOME FIGURES ANYMORE.
TAKE THIS SERI-OUSLY!

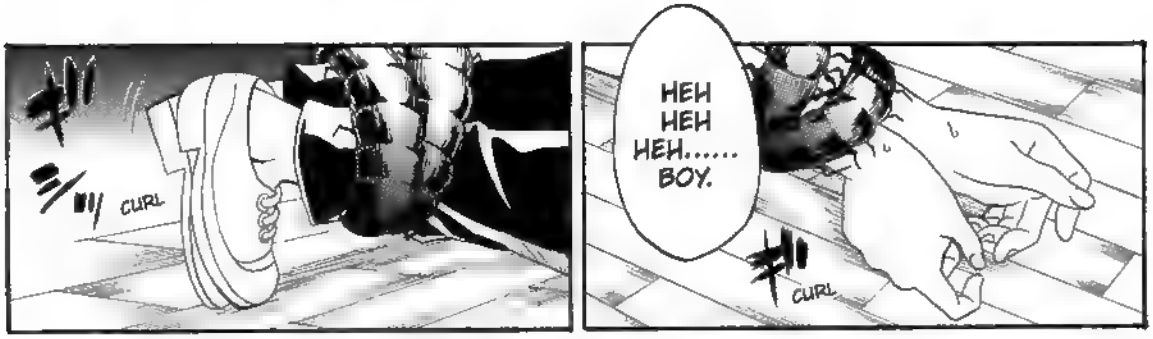
...
OURI...

STAND
RIGHT.
LET'S GO.

OPEN
SOU-JOU-SAMA.
THE PROTECTORS ARE GATHERING.
!
THEY'RE HERE.

HAA.
HAA.
BZZ
BZZ
STEP
STEP
STEP
STEP
STEP
STEP
OURI
.....!!
WHERE
ARE
YOU
.....?

CORPSE PRINCESS 11



DEATH 46: OPERATION SEALED DEITY (PART 1)

GUH .....
YANK
CAT .....
CAT .....
SHF
SHF
CAT .....!
SWIRL
SWIRL
YOU MUST APPEAR THAT WAY TO HOKUTO, BOY.
RIGHT.
AHH.
C-CAT ?
TCH .....

SO YOU MUST SOMEHOW BE CLOSER TO CAT THAN HUMAN, BOY... THROUGH A BOND... PERHAPS.
HER EYES ARE SPECIAL. THEY ARE MIRRORS THAT REFLECT THE TRUE NATURE OF THINGS.
!?

...YOU SEEM TO KNOW WHY THAT MIGHT BE.
WELL ...

... WHAT THE HECK'S ... ... THAT MEAN ...?

.....HOW PERFECT. THERE WOULD BE NO MEANING IN KILLING YOU WITHOUT HOSHIMURA BY YOUR SIDE, BUT...
...YOU CAN SERVE AS HOKUTO'S PLAYTHING UNTIL SHE TIRES OF YOU.
CRACK
CRACK

HEH HEH... EITHER WAY.....
...

TUG
LOOKS AS THOUGH HOKUTO WANTS TO PLAY WITH HER FELINE FRIEND?
!!
OW.

SNAP
!?
BEND
A CAT ...
GRIP
GRIP
HEH-HEH... BUT BE WARNED. HOKUTO IS AS FICKLE AS AN INFANT.
SHE MAY DECIDE TO SNAP YOUR NECK FOR NO REASON AT ALL, BOY.
AH.
GUH .....

HOW CAN I GET AWAY FROM THEM.....?
...!!
DAMMIT... THIS GUY.....
HOKUTO WOULD RIP YOU LIMB FROM LIMB UNTIL HER WHIM WAS SATISFIED, AND I WOULDN'T STOP HER.
AND IF SHE DOES, WELL... THERE'D BE NO HELPING IT.....

NOW AND THEN...WHEN ONE APPEARS BEFORE HOKUTO, SHE JUMPS AT THE OPPORTUNITY.
HMM? YES, NOW AND THEN.
THE SHIKA-BANE AT THE EN-TRANCE ...WAS THAT .....?
WHY.....ARE YOU IN THIS ABANDONED BUILDING?
CRAP.....!! WHY'D THIS HAVE TO HAPPEN TODAY .....?
THIS... ROAMING, AS IT WERE..... WE'VE BEEN ORDERED TO STAND BY, YET THERE'S NO CHANGING HER MIND ONCE SHE'S DECIDED SOMETHING.
IT'S A BAD HABIT OF HERS.
...!
...!!
ACCORDING TO KEITO..... YOU LOT ARE ABOUT TO LAUNCH A MAJOR OFFENSIVE.
SO THE OTHERS ARE WATCHING OVER THE LAIR.
BY THE WAY, BOY ...
RIGHT.

...
...WHY ARE YOU HERE?
YOUR PROTECTORS HAVE BEEN SCURRYING ABOUT THE COUNTRY THESE PAST FEW DAYS HUNTING AS MANY SHIKABANE AS THEY CAN, SO WHY NOT YOU TOO?
...HAVE SOMETHING TO DO WITH THE IMPENDING ATTACK?
DOES IT.....
...
SO YOU WON'T GIVE IT TO ME STRAIGHT ...
IN THAT CASE... I'LL HAVE TO ASK YOUR BODY INSTEAD.
HEH..... FIRST I'VE HEARD OF IT.
.....!!
SLIP
I'LL JUST USE THESE TO MONITOR YOUR PULSE, BODY TEMPERATURE, AND SWEAT PRODUCTION.
LIKE AN ORGANIC LIE DETECTOR.
HEH-EH... FEAR NOT. THIS ISN'T TORTURE.
...!
GULP

CRAWL
EVEN MONKS AND SOLDIERS, NO MATTER HOW WELL-TRAINED, CANNOT COMPLETELY SUPPRESS THEIR PHYSIOLOGY.
BESIDES WHICH..... I HARDLY THINK YOU HAVE SUCH STRENGTH IN YOU.
HEH HEH HEH .....
OOH ...
SQUIRM
SQUIRM
IF HE QUESTIONS ME LIKE THIS..... THEY'LL FIND OUT ABOUT OPERATION SEALED DEITY...!!
TH- THIS IS BAD...!!
...!!
NOW... LET ME ASK YOU AGAIN .....
OOZE
THAT'D BE..... REALLY BAD!!
THE WHERE, THE WHEN,— EVERYTHING ABOUT THE PLAN.....!!

STAB
SPLURT
WHEN IS THIS OFFENSIVE GOING TO HAPPEN?
WHEN IS THE KOUGON SECT PLANNING TO ATTACK .....?

...
BADUM

HAA.
HAA .....!

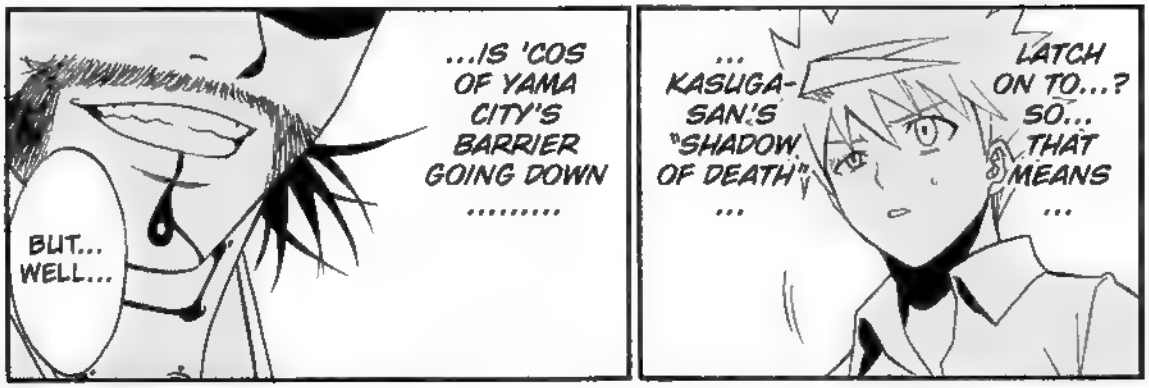
AND EVEN IF I DID...
...I WOULDN'T FEEL LIKE TELLING YOU.
DRIP
SORRY, HAZAMA .....
...BUT I DON'T KNOW SQUAT !!
OHH .....
BY WOUNDING HIMSELF, HE'S THROWN HIS PULSE AND SWEAT GLANDS INTO OVERDRIVE. ALL TO KEEP ME FROM THE TRUTH.....
SQUIRM
I SEE..... DOES THAT MEAN...
...YOU'D PREFER A PROPER INTERROGATION !?
!
STEP

OOH.
UWAHH...
TWIST
OW...
OWW...
!?
GRAB
!!
SMACK
KOFF...
.....
HEH HEH.....
HMPH.
GWAHH!
THUD
GAH.
SLAM

I SUPPOSE THAT'S ENOUGH.
FWUMP
NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT.....
NO MATTER WHAT SCHEMES YOU HUMANS COME UP WITH .....
...ALL WILL BE FOR NAUGHT...
KYAHH.
KYAHH.
...IN THE FACE OF A SHIKABANE AS PURE AND SIMPLE AS HOKUTO.
KNOWING YOUR PLANS WOULD ONLY LESSEN THE THRILLS.
HEH HEH ...
GAHH.
KOFF.
.....!! DAMN.
THE PICTURE .....

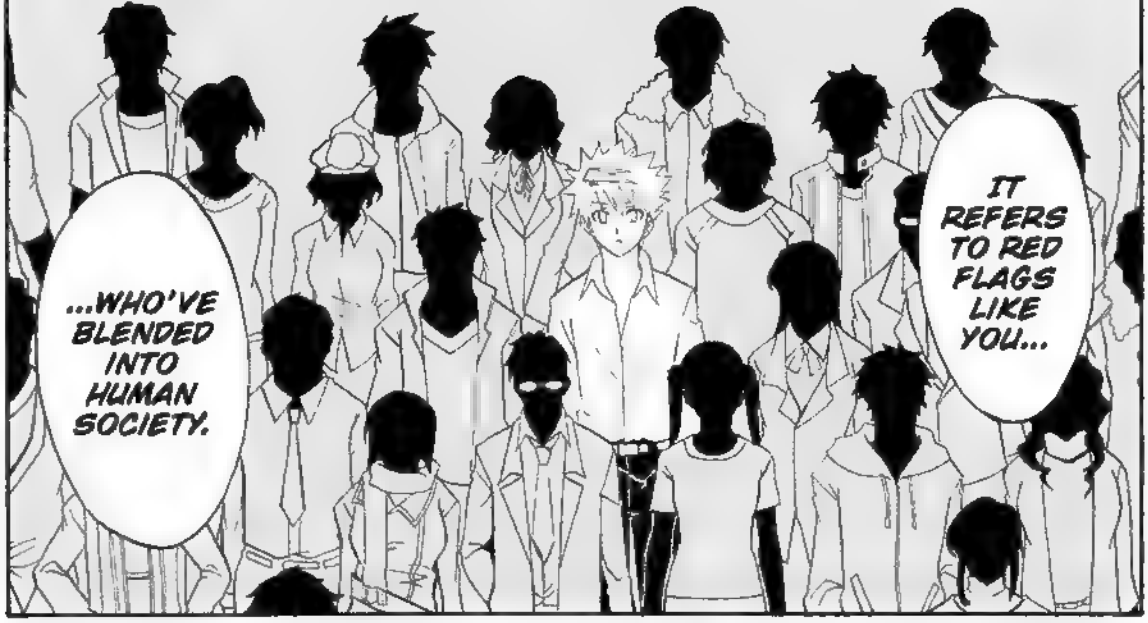
QUITE A RARE THING TO HAVE ON YOU, BOY.
OHH..... WHAT IS THIS, NOW...?
HEH HEH...YOU WANTED A PROPER SEND-OFF BEFORE HEADING INTO BATTLE?
EH HEH...
IS SHE YOUR WOMAN?
THE SHADOW OF DEATH IS ON THE GIRL IN THIS PHOTO.
SHE'S... GOT NOTHING TO DO... WITH IT.
...!?
NO!
IT INDICATES HOW CLOSE ONE IS TO DEATH.
THE SHADOW OVER HER IS A DEATH OMEN.
HEH HEH...OH, WE BOTH KNOW THAT'S NOT TRUE.

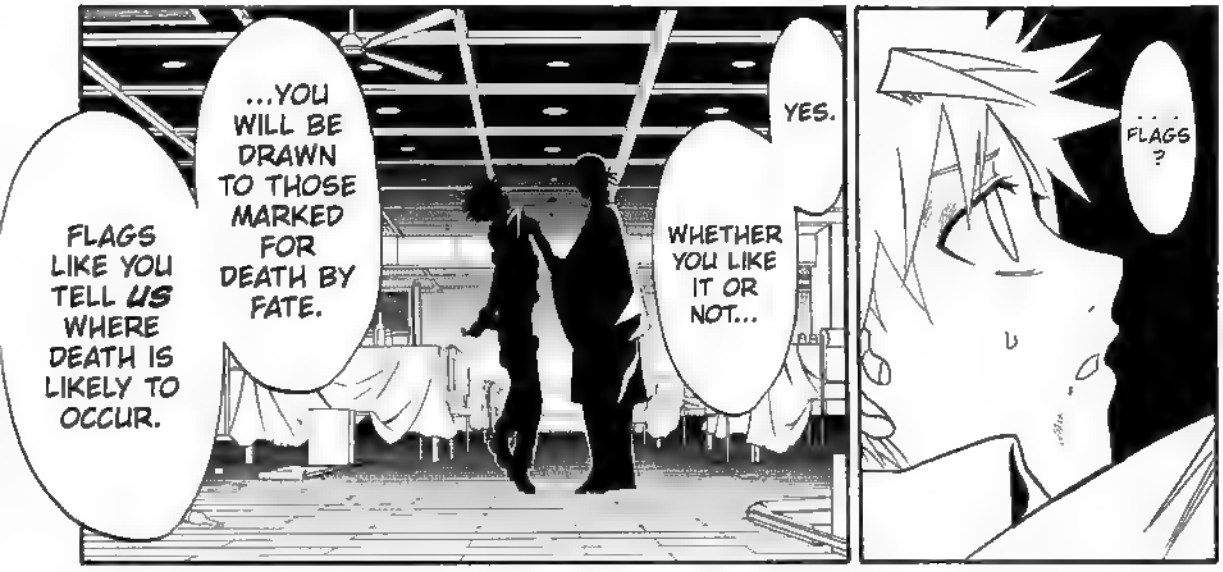
I WARNED YOU ONCE BEFORE, NO?
TO STAY AWAY FROM THOSE WITH THE SHADOW OF DEATH.
KEEP AWAY FROM THOSE WITH THE SHADOW OF DEATH
IF YOU'RE NOT CAREFUL, THEY'LL DRAW
IT COULD LATCH ON TO YOU, FROM HER, AND LEAD YOU TO A MISERABLE DEATH IN SOME DARK HOLE UNKNOWN EVEN TO US.
HEH HEH.


...IS 'COS OF YAMA CITY'S BARRIER GOING DOWN .....
BUT... WELL...
... KASUGA-SAN'S "SHADOW OF DEATH" ...
LATCH ON TO...? SO... THAT MEANS ...

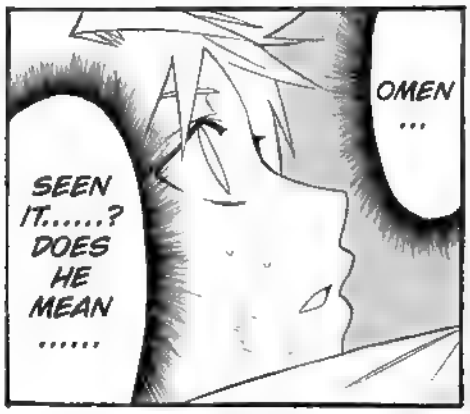
...IF YOU WERE, IN FACT, AN "OMINOUS DEATH OMEN" YOURSELF .....
...THAT WOULD BE A DIFFERENT STORY, BOY.

OMINOUS.....
...DEATH OMEN.....?
...THAT PHRASE?
DIFFER-ENT..... HOW?
HOW... DO YOU KNOW...
TUG
...IT'S JARGON USED BY INTELLIGENT SHIKABANE LIKE MYSELF.
HOW?
BECAUSE...


...WHO'VE BLENDED INTO HUMAN SOCIETY.
IT REFERS TO RED FLAGS LIKE YOU...

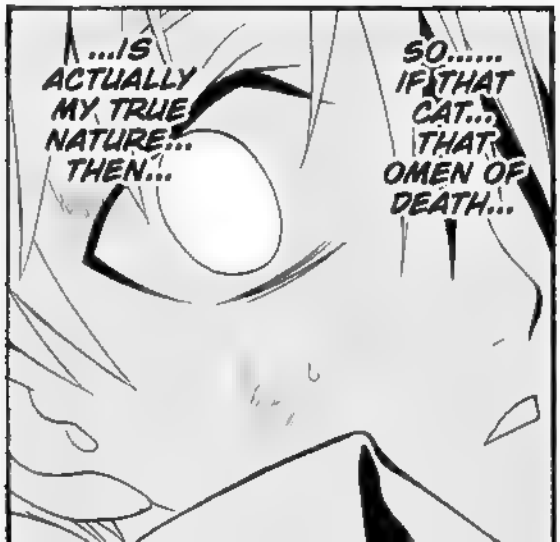

FLAGS LIKE YOU TELL US WHERE DEATH IS LIKELY TO OCCUR.
...YOU WILL BE DRAWN TO THOSE MARKED FOR DEATH BY FATE.
YES.
WHETHER YOU LIKE IT OR NOT...
. . . . FLAGS ?

SUCH IS YOUR NATURE. YOUR SAGA .....!!
SUCH IS THE FATE OF THOSE WE CALL "OMINOUS DEATH OMENS."


OMEN ...
SEEN IT.....? DOES HE MEAN .....

YOUR FATE..... THE OMEN, MADE CORPOREAL ...
AND... IF YOU REALLY ARE SUCH A FLAG, THEN I EXPECT YOU'VE SEEN IT, BOY.

...THAT CAT OOOOOO!?
!?


...IS ACTUALLY MY TRUE NATURE... THEN...
SO..... IF THAT CAT... THAT OMEN OF DEATH...

...IN AND OF MYSELF.....?
...AN "OMINOUS DEATH OMEN"...
...I'M..... LITERALLY...
THEN.....
IT'S NOT SURPRISING..... YOU'VE ALWAYS BEEN CLOSE TO OUR SIDE.
THE OMINOUS DEATH OMEN.
HEH HEH HEH... SO THE CAT HOKUTO SEES YOU AS IS THE OMEN.
...!!
HOW LAUGHABLY IRONIC, BOY...THAT YOU WOULD BECOME A MONK.
YOU'RE A FLAG WHO DRAWS IN AND REVEALS DEATH SHADOWS.
WE HAVE AN OPEN POSITION.
..... INDEED.
ACTUALLY, I'M GIVING YOU QUITE THE WARM WELCOME. BESIDES .....
HEH-HEH-HEH. DON'T GLARE AT ME.

BOY..... YOU WILL BECOME A SHIKABANE ...
...AND JOIN THE SEVEN STARS.

WITH THE RIGHT SAGA, I HAVE NO DOUBT THAT YOU WILL TURN SHIKABANE AFTER DYING.
THEN YOU WILL WORSHIP HOKUTO AND CARVE OUR EMBLEM ON YOURSELF, MAKING YOU ONE OF US.
!?
WHA—...?

HEH-HEH..... TOO BAD. BUT THAT ATTITUDE WILL CHANGE WITH TIME...
THUD
...ONCE THIS WORLD IS ENVELOPED BY THE "LAND OF THE DEAD" .....
WHO'D EVER WANNA BE ONE OF YOU .....!!?
L-LIKE THAT'D EVER HAPPEN !!
GRIND

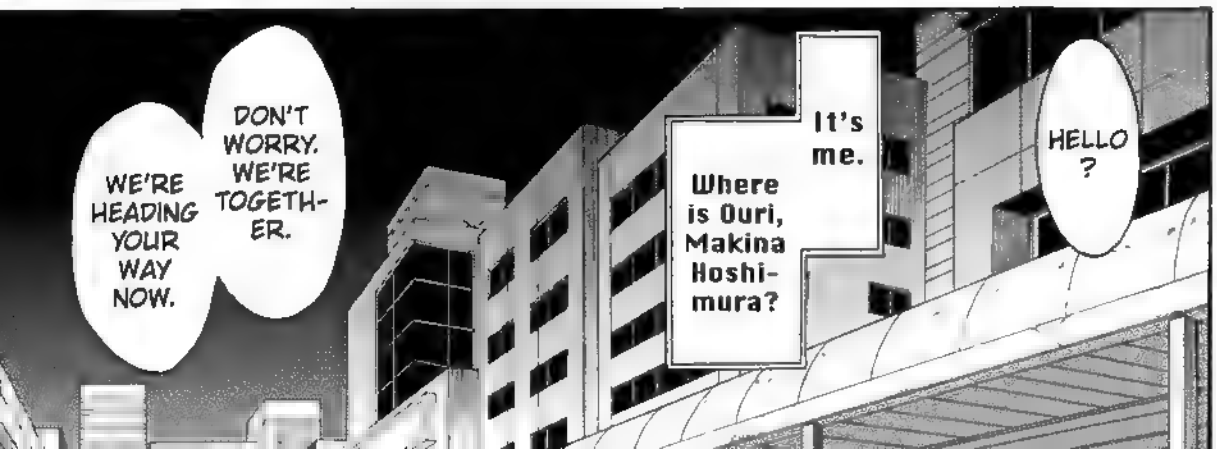
WHICH OF THE TWO FORMS BETTER HELPS YOU TRULY UNDERSTAND YOURSELF...
THEN YOU WILL SEE .....
HUMAN... OR SHIKA-BANE.
.....
NO ONE ELSE WILL GIVE SUCH A WARM WELCOME...
... TO ONE WHO REEKS OF DEATH.
HEH .....
HEH HEH HEH .....
HEH-HEH-HEH. HA-HA-HA.
HA-HA-HA!

SKID
DASH
MY BOND WITH OURI .....
...IS DEFINITELY LEADING ME HERE...
!
OURI !!

HOSHI-MURA-SAN ...
WHAT'RE YOU DOING!? WE'RE LATE .....
!

A SHIKA-BANE .....?
DID YOU KILL IT?
..... NO.

?
RIING

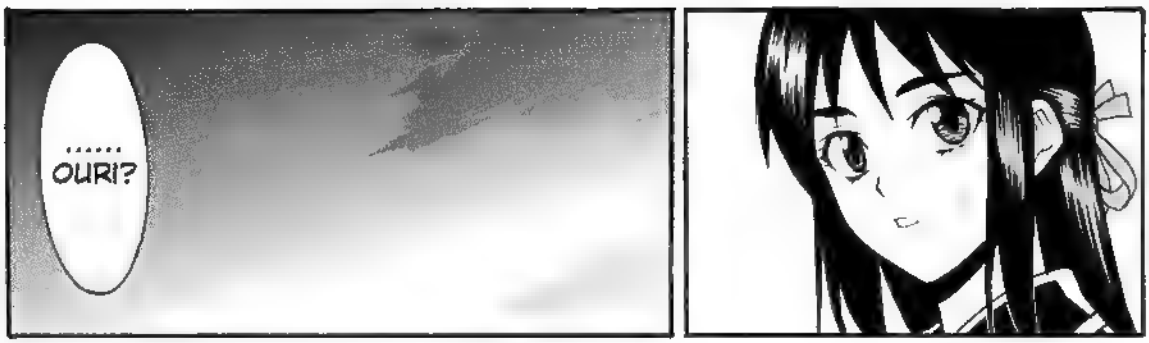

HELLO ?
It's me.
Where is Ouri, Makina Hoshi-mura?
DON'T WORRY. WE'RE TOGETH-ER.
WE'RE HEADING YOUR WAY NOW.

BUT NOW, WE HAVE TO...
BEEP
ANY-HOW...!! WE'LL TALK ABOUT THIS LATER.

GRAB

...GONNA PROTECT YOU.
..... HOSHI-MURA-SAN.
I'M.....

NO MATTER MY "TRUE NATURE" OR WHATEVER, I'LL PROTECT YOU TO THE END.
EVEN IF NO ONE ELSE WILL HAVE ME.....
SO.....


.....
OURI?

YOU'RE ALL HERE.

BAM

...QUITE A SIGHT.

LINED UP, YOU'RE...

IKAI/YANATSU PROTECTOR:
TAKAMASA "GENPAKU" SOUGI
CORPSE PRINCESS:
ITSUKI YAMAGAMI

SHIKOKU CHINJUFU PROTECTOR:
TOUTO HAYATATE
CORPSE PRINCESS:
MUTSUHA MUTSUHANA

SENDAI PROTECTOR:
AYAMITSU HAYASHIDA
CORPSE PRINCESS:
URUKO BAROQUE

SAITAMA PROTECTOR:
MAGARI NIJISHIMA
CORPSE PRINCESS:
SUGUKO ONOUE

HOKKAIDO/DOUNAN PROTECTOR:
KASHIN NAGATOMO
CORPSE PRINCESS:
ANZU CHIGASAKI

OKAYAMA PROTECTOR:
JIN KISARAGI
CORPSE PRINCESS:
IROHA KISARAGI

KANAGAWA PROTECTOR:
TAKEHIKO MUTOU
CORPSE PRINCESS:
AKI ASUKA

HYOUGO/KOBE PROTECTOR:
SOUSETSU KAJIO
CORPSE PRINCESS:
KANAE YATAKI

LINED UP, YOU'RE...

OKAYAMA PROTECTOR:
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SAITAMA PROTECTOR:
MAGARI NIJISHIMA
CORPSE PRINCESS:
SUGUKO ONOUE

SCRATCH
THAT'S RIGHT.
WHAT A DRAG, THOUGH.
...
FOR SURE, IF YOU'RE GONNA TAKE DOWN THE SHIKABANE KING...
...YOU'RE GONNA NEED A BUNCH OF ELITES LIKE US. ONLY NATURAL.
NOD NOD
KILLING SHIKABANE AND GAINING VIRTUE IS ENOUGH FOR US.
WHAT-EVER IT TAKES.
FU-FU ..... WE'LL DO OUR BEST.
SILENT
SOUNDS SIMPLE ENOUGH TO ME.
WE BEAT UP THE SMALL FRIES AND THEN GO AFTER THE FINAL BOSS. RIGHT, AYAMITSU?
...
CLICK
CLICK
RIGHT ?

BOTTLE HANDSOME YOUNG MAN

HMM ?
.....HEY, WAIT!! THERE'RE SUPPOSED TO BE TEN TEAMS, BUT I ONLY SEE NINE.
INCLUDING MINE.
DON'T TELL ME THE HIGHER-UPS STILL HAVEN'T DECIDED !?
HAVE THE FINAL PAIR BEEN CHOSEN ?
YES, THEY'RE .....
SKRITCH
IT'S US, OLD MAN.
STEP
SADAHIRO MIBU
CORPSE PRINCESS: AKIRA TOOKA

I'M OVER-WORKED, I TELL YA.
YEAH. THIS MORNING.
...JUST FINISHED NEGOTIATIONS OVER IN EUROPE, AND NOW THIS. GEEZ.....
SADA-HIRO .....!? YOU'VE .....
...COME HOME?
YOU WEREN'T ON THE LIST I HAD...
WE'RE BACK IN JAPAN, SO SPEAK POLITELY..... SHAKE OFF THOSE BAD HABITS FROM OVERSEAS.....
...!!
SADAHIRO MIBU'S THE NAME. THIS HERE'S AKIRA. NICE TO MEETCHA, SOUJOU UMEHA—
YEAH.
SO YOU'RE OUR TENTH?
RAHH !?
WHAM
IT MUST BE.....FOUR YEARS SINCE YOU LEFT MY TUTELAGE AND BEGAN STUDYING UNDER THE GONDAI-SOUJOU, NO?
IT'S BEEN FAR TOO LONG.
THIS GIRL'S SOMETHING ELSE...
...
!!

YEAH... THAT LONG, HUH?
... SO ...
...WHY COME HOME NOW?

YOUR NEGOTIATIONS WERE GOING SMOOTHLY, SO THERE MUST BE A REASON YOU LEFT TO JOIN THIS DANGEROUS MISSION?
YOU MENTIONED BEING..... OVER-WORKED.
WAS THIS ON THE GONDAI-SOUJOU'S ORDERS?

BUT MORE THAN THAT ...
WELL, YEAH, IT WAS.
..... HMM.

YOU MEAN OURI?
?
.....!
...ONE NAME CAUGHT MY EYE. ONE CONNECTED TO HIM... TO KEISEI.
...ON THE LIST OF THIS MISSION'S MEMBERS .....

DID THAT KID..... REALLY BECOME A CONTRACTING MONK?
I HEARD THE RUMORS, BUT..... IS IT TRUE?
..... YEAH.

I'M SO SORRY ABOUT KEISE! .....
SCRATCH
WHAT-EVER.
WE'RE SOLDIERS..... ALWAYS READY TO DIE.

MAKES SENSE THAT THE KID WOULD BE DRAWN TO THE JOB, BEING HIS LITTLE BROTHER AND ALL.
BUT..... I STILL CAN'T HELP BUT WORRY.
SO I WANTED TO MEET HIM. SEE WHAT HE'S LIKE.
'COS IT WAS US...WHO DRAGGED THE KID FROM THAT ROOM ...
...AND BROUGHT HIM BACK TO THE WORLD OF THE LIVING.

.....
KNOCK IT OFF.
HEH-HEH.
...WHEN IT COMES TO YOUR COMRADE KEISEI, YOU STILL GET FIRED UP.
YOU'RE USUALLY SO COLD AND LOGICAL, NEVER WANTING TO LOOK AFTER OTHERS, BUT.....
FU-FU .....
.....
HMM?
DIDN'T SPOT HIM HERE.
...HEY, OLD MAN. WHERE IS THE PIP-SQUEAK, ANYWAY?
.....
SO...
...YOU TALKED WITH HAZAMA ABOUT THIS.....

GEEZ ...!
YOU HATE WHEN PEOPLE KEEP SECRETS FROM YOU, BUT THEN YOU GO AND HIDE THINGS YOURSELF?
THIS IS THE FIRST I'M HEARING ABOUT THIS CAT.
EH? AH, SORRY .....
I COULD NEVER REALLY EXPLAIN IT RIGHT .....
THAT RIGHT ?
.....SO WHAT ELSE ARE YOU HIDING?
EH? AH... NOTHING, PROBABLY .....
U-UMM, HOSHI-MURA-SAN?
IS THAT ALL?
FINE.
LET'S GET GOING ...
STAND
ガタン
...OR WE'LL MISS THE OTHERS!
!?
STEP
HMM ?
SOME-THING ELSE TO SAY?

YOU'RE AN "OMINOUS DEATH OMEN"...
...AND I'M A CORPSE PRINCESS.
SOUNDS FINE TO ME.

HE MADE YOU HIS LITTLE BROTHER, AFTER ALL.
KEISEI WAS APPARENTLY NEVER CONCERNED ABOUT IT.

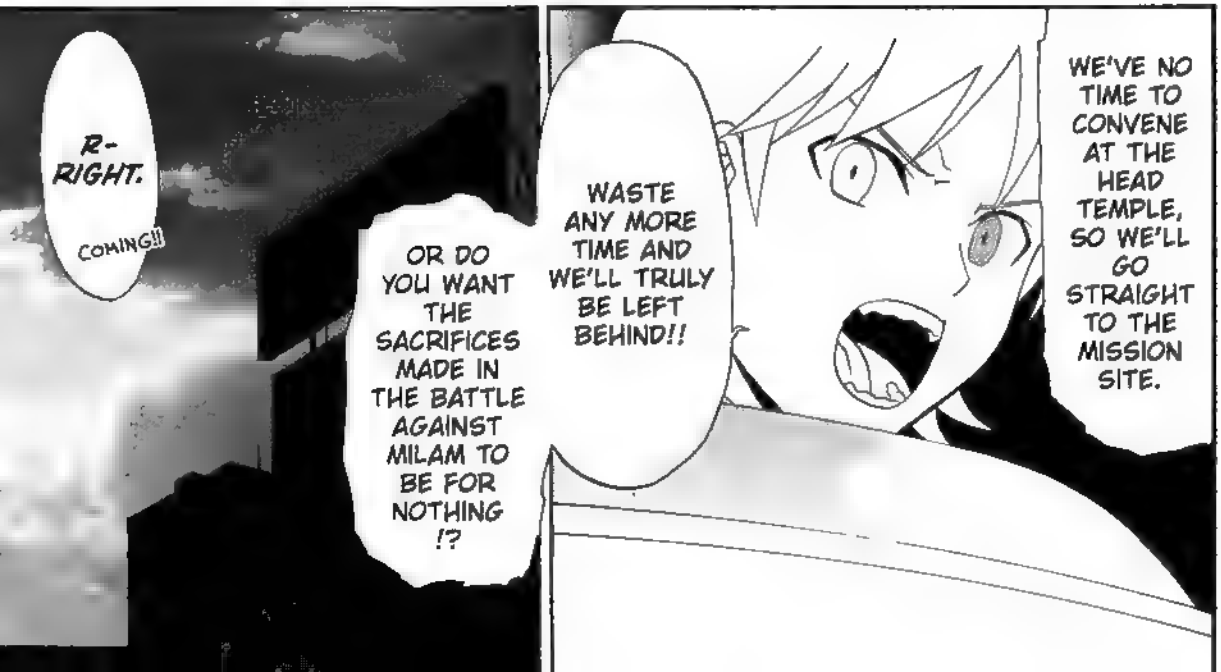
SCREEEEE
I'M .....
THANKS, HOSHI-MURA-SAN .....

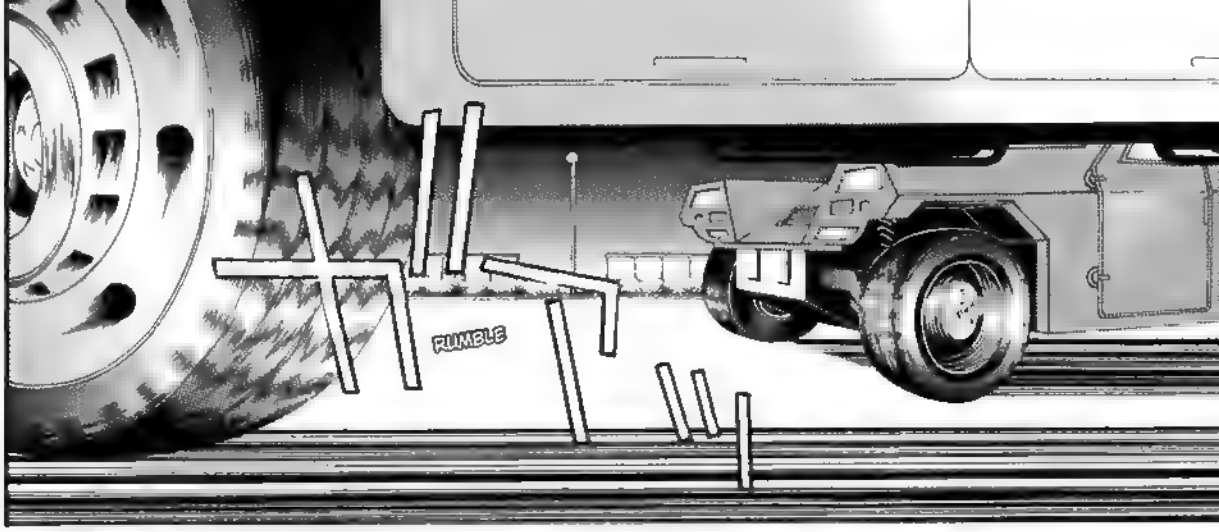
BIG BRO.....
..... YEAH.

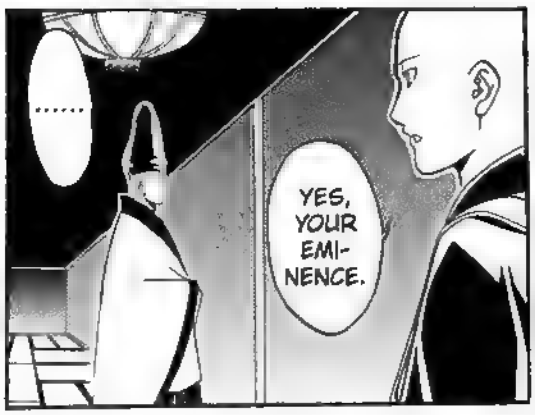
GAH !!
WHAM
SCREE

THANKS.
SHIRAE-SAN!?
WHY'D YOU ..?
KACHAK

OURI!! MAKINA HOSHI-MURA !!
WHY ARE YOU STANDING AROUND HERE AND NOT AT THE MEET-UP POINT!?
HURRY UP AND GET IN!!
WHIRR


R-RIGHT. COMING!!
OR DO YOU WANT THE SACRIFICES MADE IN THE BATTLE AGAINST MILAM TO BE FOR NOTHING !?
WASTE ANY MORE TIME AND WE'LL TRULY BE LEFT BEHIND!!
WE'VE NO TIME TO CONVENE AT THE HEAD TEMPLE, SO WE'LL GO STRAIGHT TO THE MISSION SITE.


RUMBLE


.....
YES, YOUR EMI-NENCE.

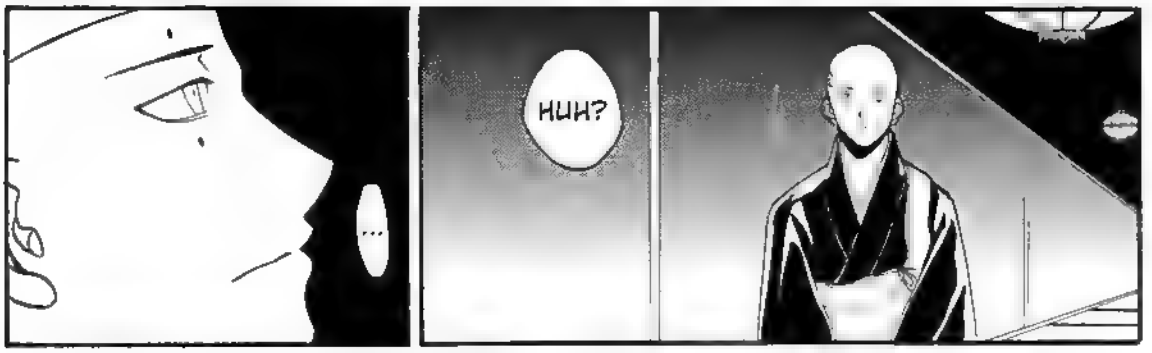
WAS IT REALLY WISE TO SEND GON-SOUJOU MIBU WITH THEM?
HIS ABILITY TO PRODUCE RESULTS AS A NEGOTIATOR IS REMARKABLE.

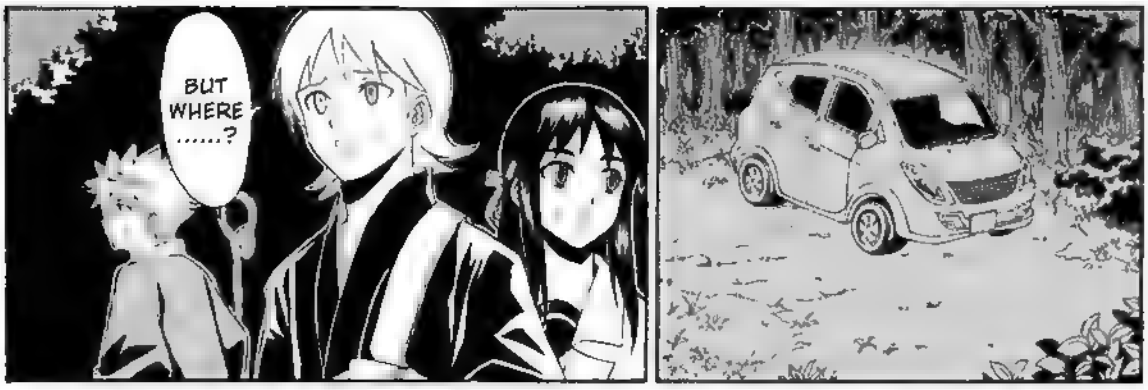
SO THEY'VE LEFT?

WHY WOULD YOU PUT HIS SUCCESSES ASIDE AND HAVE HIM JOIN OPERATION SEALED DEITY?
...IS THANKS TO THE NONIN-TERVENTION AGREEMENTS STRUCK BY GON-SOUJOU MIBU OVERSEAS.
HONESTLY, THE FACT THAT WE CAN FOCUS ON THE DOMESTIC BATTLE AGAINST THE UNCLEAN BUNCH...

I'VE STEPPED OUT OF LINE!!
I.....
I'M SORRY, YOUR EMINENCE !!

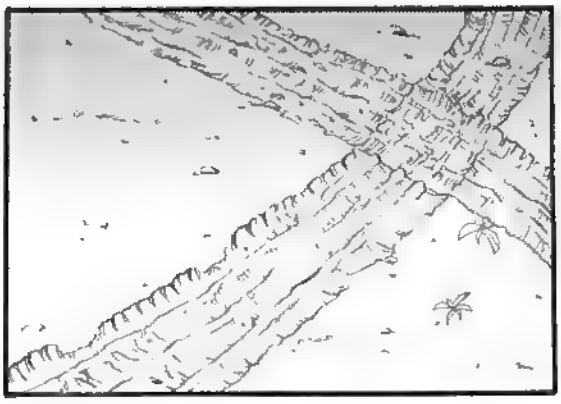
FOR HE..... IS A MAN BOUND BY OLD TIES...
HIS PARTICI-PATION IS ESSENTIAL TO THE SUCCESS OF THIS MISSION.
WORRY NOT.

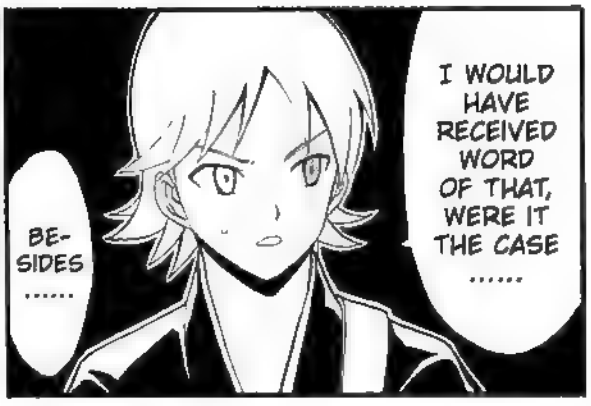

...
HUH?

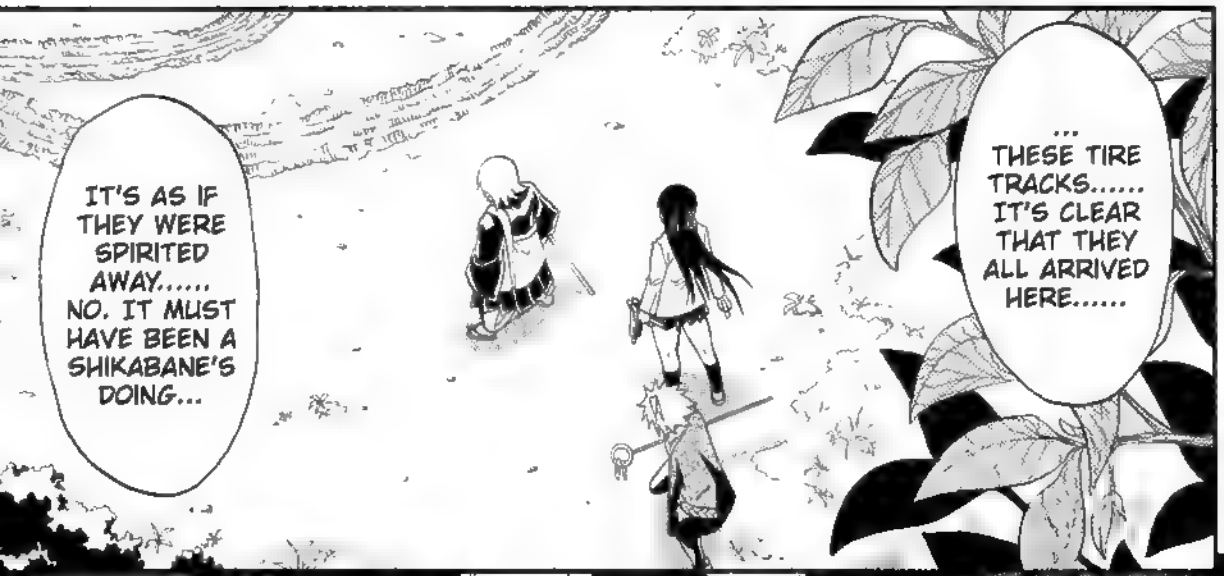

BUT WHERE .....?

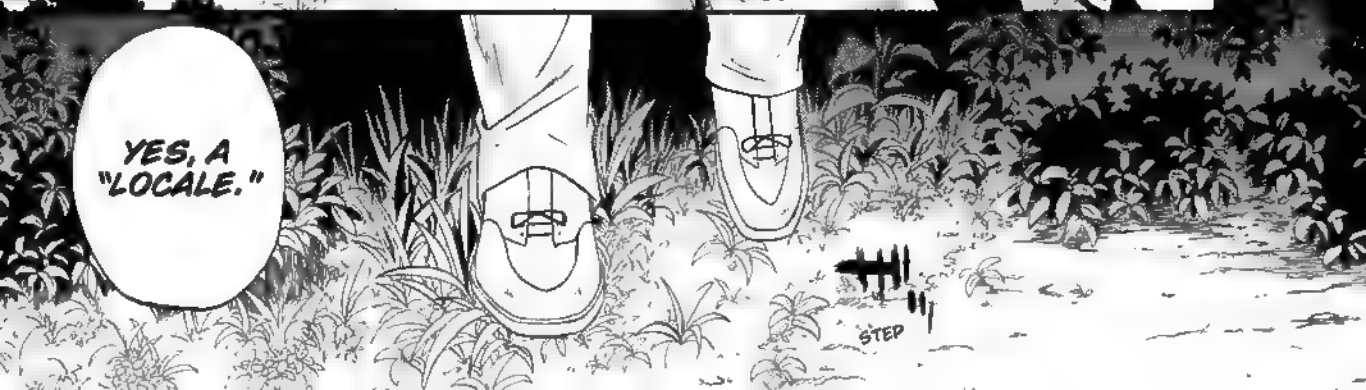
SILENT

DID THEY PICK A DIFFERENT SITE, MAYBE .....?
WHAT'S GOING ON?
NO ONE...IS HERE?




I WOULD HAVE RECEIVED WORD OF THAT, WERE IT THE CASE .....
BE-SIDES .....


IT'S AS IF THEY WERE SPIRITED AWAY..... NO. IT MUST HAVE BEEN A SHIKABANE'S DOING...
... THESE TIRE TRACKS..... IT'S CLEAR THAT THEY ALL ARRIVED HERE.....


YES, A "LOCALE."
STEP

STEP
!!
TURN
THE MONKS WHO ARRIVED HERE WERE DRAWN INTO MY LOCALE, VEHICLES AND ALL.
YOU ARE THE ONLY ONES REMAINING ...
ISAKA !!
KAGHAK
LEAP
SEVEN STARS !!
BOOM
BOOM
BOOM
BOOM
BOOM
!!

SHK
キュ
キュン
SHK
SHK
キュ
SHK
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
TMP
WHOOSH
WHAM
!!

IT'S NO USE.
SWIRL
THIS PLACE TOO IS ALREADY WITHIN MY CAGE.
SWIRL
CLATTER
CLATTER
SKID
SKID
!
SKID
SWIRL
FU-FU ……
FU ……
SWIRL
SWIRL
…TO ENCOUNTER ME, OF ALL PEOPLE……
FU-FU… WHAT ILL FORTUNE FOR BOTH YOU AND THEM……
YOU'RE WRONG.
KAGHAK
EVEN A GOD WOULD SUCCUMB TO THE CURSE AND DIE AT THIS POINT.
IT'S TOO LATE NOW ……
THE FOREST ……
…IT'S CHANG-ING…

I FEEL LUCKY TO BE HERE.
SWIRL
NEVER THOUGHT THE CHANCE'D COME THIS SOON.
THE CHANCE TO KILL YOU MYSELF !!
OHH .....

HEY, SADAHIRO. WHEN DID MY HAIRSTYLE CHANGE?
HMM? BACK WITH THE 2006 CALENDAR.
NOBODY REMEMBERS THAT.
A SHOCKINGLY LOW NUMBER OF THEM SOLD.
.....

DEATH 47:
OPERATION SEALED DEITY
(PART 2)

CORPSE PRINCESS

Vol.11

YOSHIICHI AKAHITO

A LOCALE... HUH?
STEP
WE'RE REALLY IN IT NOW.....

PRETTY AMAZING .....
NEVER SEEN SUCH A HUGE LOCALE BEFORE.
HMPH .....

WHOOM
!!
THIS HAS GOTTA BE ONE OF THE FOUNDERS OR THE SEVEN STARS.
SUCKS THAT I COULDN'T REACT IN TIME FROM INSIDE THE MOVING BUS.....

SHING
SMASHING A LOCALE CREATED WITH TOUGH SAGA IS NO EASY FEAT.
BUT...
BREAK THROUGH, OF COURSE.
WHAT DO WE DO?

SLASH
MY FUDOU MYOU-OU BLADE CAN SLICE THAT SAGA TO RIBBONS AND BRING IT ALL DOWN.
...IT'S FAR FROM IMPOS-SIBLE.
CREEP
IN THE MEANTIME, YOU GUYS TAKE OUT ANY MINOR ANNOY-ANCES.
SWING
!
FWIP
FWIP
BOOM
BOOM
PIERCE
PIERCE
!!

THUD
.....
GAHH .....
SPLORT
WHISTLE
ヒュー♪

THAT'S MY TAKAMASA AND ITSUKI FOR YA. SENSED IT WITHOUT NEEDING TO BE TOLD.
I LOVE THIS LITTLE GUY.
PLEASE STOP THAT.
..... BESIDES ...

CREEP
...WE'VE GOT MORE TO WORRY ABOUT.

SOME EVEN APPEAR TO BE MUTATED.
NOOO, I LOVE IT.
KACHAK
OHHH.
FIGURES THE NUMBER OF THEM IN THE HIDEOUT WOULD BORDER ON OBNOXIOUS.
AND WHILE YOU'RE AT IT.....SHOW ME WHAT TO EXPECT FROM EACH REGION'S STRONGEST COMBO.
TAP
SHOULD SERVE AS A HANDY WARM-UP FOR WHAT'S TO COME.
...GETS A SHOT AT THE KING...BY MY SIDE.
WHOEVER PROVES MOST USEFUL...
CHAK
IT'D BE AN HONOR.
...THAT SO?

HMPH .....
KACHAK
.....HEAR THAT?
SADA-HIRO?
...I'M LISTENING.
WHISPER
AKIRA..... LET'S SLIP AWAY.
DON'T LET THEM NOTICE YOU.
UNDER-STOOD.
STEP
BECAUSE OUR TARGET .....
...IS HIM.

NOW GO!
STAB
LEAP
BRING IT ON!!
YOU SHIKABANE !!
RUMBLE

SHIFT
SMASH

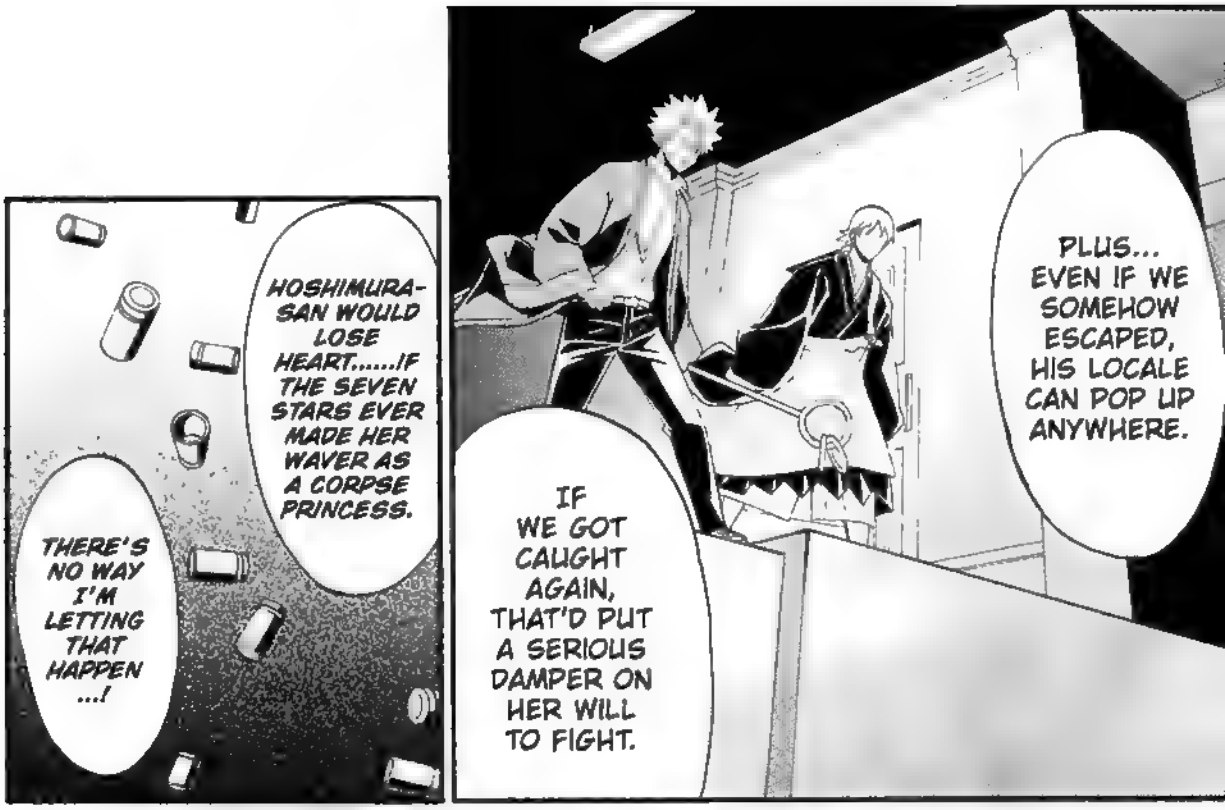
SHIFT
TAP
WHOOSH
!!
!!
HOSHI-MURA-SAN, BEHIND YOU!!
SHIFT SHIFT
GRAB
KACHAK

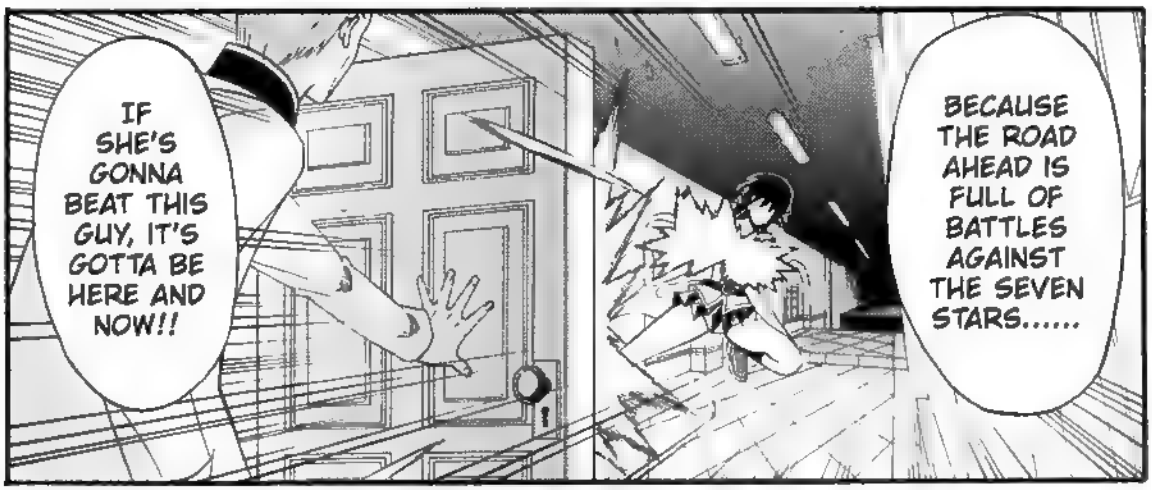
SMASH
WHOOSH
BOOM
SHIFT
SHIFT
SHIFT
.....
FU-FU.
SNAP

WHOOM
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
WHOOSH
BOOM
BOOM
BOOM
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM

WOOM
THUD
!?
SLAM
TMP
STEP
CLOSE ONE...
.....
HEH-HEH.

ALL LONG-RANGE ATTACKS WILL BE BLOCKED BY SHIFTING WALLS..... BUT WHEN WE ATTEMPT TO CLOSE THE GAP, HE PUSHES US FARTHER AWAY.
IS THERE ANY WAY TO WIN IN HERE .....!?
.....!
DAMN IT ALL !!
WHAT'S WITH THIS LOCALE !?
ゴゴ...
WOOM
WOOM
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
!?
BUT..... WE CAN'T DO THAT.
KICK
OURI!! WE NEED TO RETREAT.
UNLESS WE TAKE THE FIGHT OUTSIDE OF HIS LOCALE, MAKINA HOSHIMURA WON'T STAND A CHANCE .....
YEAH..... YOU MAY BE RIGHT.
THEN LET—
THAT'S WHY WE CAN'T.
RUNNING AWAY FROM THE SEVEN STARS WOULD BE A STAIN ON HOSHI-MURA-SAN'S DETERMINA-TION.


HOSHIMURA-SAN WOULD LOSE HEART.....IF THE SEVEN STARS EVER MADE HER WAVER AS A CORPSE PRINCESS.
THERE'S NO WAY I'M LETTING THAT HAPPEN ...!
IF WE GOT CAUGHT AGAIN, THAT'D PUT A SERIOUS DAMPER ON HER WILL TO FIGHT.
PLUS... EVEN IF WE SOMEHOW ESCAPED, HIS LOCALE CAN POP UP ANYWHERE.


IF SHE'S GONNA BEAT THIS GUY, IT'S GOTTA BE HERE AND NOW!!
BECAUSE THE ROAD AHEAD IS FULL OF BATTLES AGAINST THE SEVEN STARS.....

...IF YOU NEED A WAY TO WIN...
CLENCH
...I'VE GOT ONE!!

ALSO .....
RUSTLE
FSSHH

!?
OURI!
!
STEP
ひた
CHAK
DAMN .....
OF COURSE..... HE WOULD NEED A WAY TO FINISH OFF OUR COMRADES WHO WERE SUCKED INSIDE .....
..... PROB-ABLY.
WHOOSH
SHH —
SHU .....
SHU .....
TWITCH
TWITCH
SHH —

THRASH
.....!
THRASH
THRASH
FWIP
!!
WHAM
TCH
...!!
BOOM
FWIP
TMP
!?
TOO FAST
.....
.....!
!! NO WAY.....
SWISH

STAB
HOLD IT!!
!?
...!
SKID

CLENCH
DAMN .....
I'D EXPECT AS MUCH... FROM A SHIKA-BANE..... IN HERE.
SHU ...
SHU SHU.
...WE'VE GOTTA FIGHT .....!!
..... EVEN SO...
...THE PARALYSIS SHOULD BUY US SOME TIME.
POP
IF I CAN STAB HIM WITH THIS ANISE ...
STAND
BECAUSE NOW.....I KNOW WHAT I NEED TO DO...

HYAH.

ANYTIME, ANYPLACE .....
...I GOTTA STAY BY HOSHIMURA-SAN'S SIDE..... AS HER CONTRACTING MONK!!
OM.

WHAK

...!
OOZE
SKID
SKID
SKID
FU FU FU...
WHAT'S WRONG, MAKINA HOSHI-MURA?
LOSING STEAM ALREADY ?
RUMBLE
RUMBLE
.....
OR..... HAVE YOU REALIZED THAT YOUR CURSE IS NO MATCH FOR MY LOCALE .....?
IS YOUR DESPAIR HOLDING YOU BACK?
SHIFT
SHIFT
SHIFT
THAT..... WOULD BE UNDER-STAND-ABLE.
FOR US SHIKABANE, CURSES ARE MANI-FESTATIONS OF OUR SAGA. OF OUR SPIRITS.

RUMBLE
RUMBLE
RUMBLE
ゴゴゴ
A SUBLIME SPIRIT GIVES BIRTH TO SUBLIME POWER .....
...WHEREAS MORE PATHETIC INDIVIDUALS CAN ONLY PRODUCE MIDDLING CURSES.

I REFER, OF COURSE.....TO YOUR CURSE, BORN OF YOUR SIMPLE, ASININE DRIVE TOWARD REVENGE.
IT'S PROOF THAT YOUR SPIRIT IS A LOWLY THING COMPARED TO MINE.

.....
FU.

KNOWING HOW WRETCHED YOU ARE, YOU DESPAIR AND GROW SLUGGISH IN BATTLE.
SURELY, YOU MUST UNDERSTAND THAT BY NOW.

DESPAIRING? GETTING SLUGGISH?
WRONG.
I WAS JUST WORKING UP THE CONFIDENCE I NEED TO KILL YOU.
SWIRL
DASH
!?
WHAT .....?
BOOM
!!
...ME .....
DASH
!?
YOU FOOL!! AS LONG AS YOU'RE IN HERE, NOT A SINGLE ONE OF YOUR BULLETS WILL REACH ...

WHOOSH
LOSING STEAM?
DESPAIR-ING?
WHAT'S WRONG? GETTING SLUGGISH ?
—!?
FLECK
HOW .....?
!!
FWISH
POW
SLASH
RIP
NUHHH .....

BLAM
BLAM
BOOM
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
!!
STEP
STEP
SHIFT
SPLURT
GUOHHH!!
DON'T MOCK ME!!
SLAM
!!

!!
TWITCH
ビク
MAKINA HOSHI-MURA!!
……!
ビクッ!!
TWITCH
DRIP
……
HEH.
YOU …
SWAY
ゆら
GIRL ……
…YOU WASTED QUITE A BIT OF MY TIME AND ENERGY ……
CRACK
CRACK CRACK
CRACK
…BUT NOW…… IT'S……

SMASH
!? CRACKS ...?
CRACKS IN MY LOCALE .....?
CRACK
HOW DID YOU..... DO THAT?
.....IMPOSSIBLE.
...ARE WHAT GIVE POWER TO MY CURSE.
CRACK
CRACK
CRACK
STRONG WILL AND DETERMINATION ...
CRACK
LIKE I SAID...
...I WAS BUILDING UP MY CONFIDENCE .....
CRACK

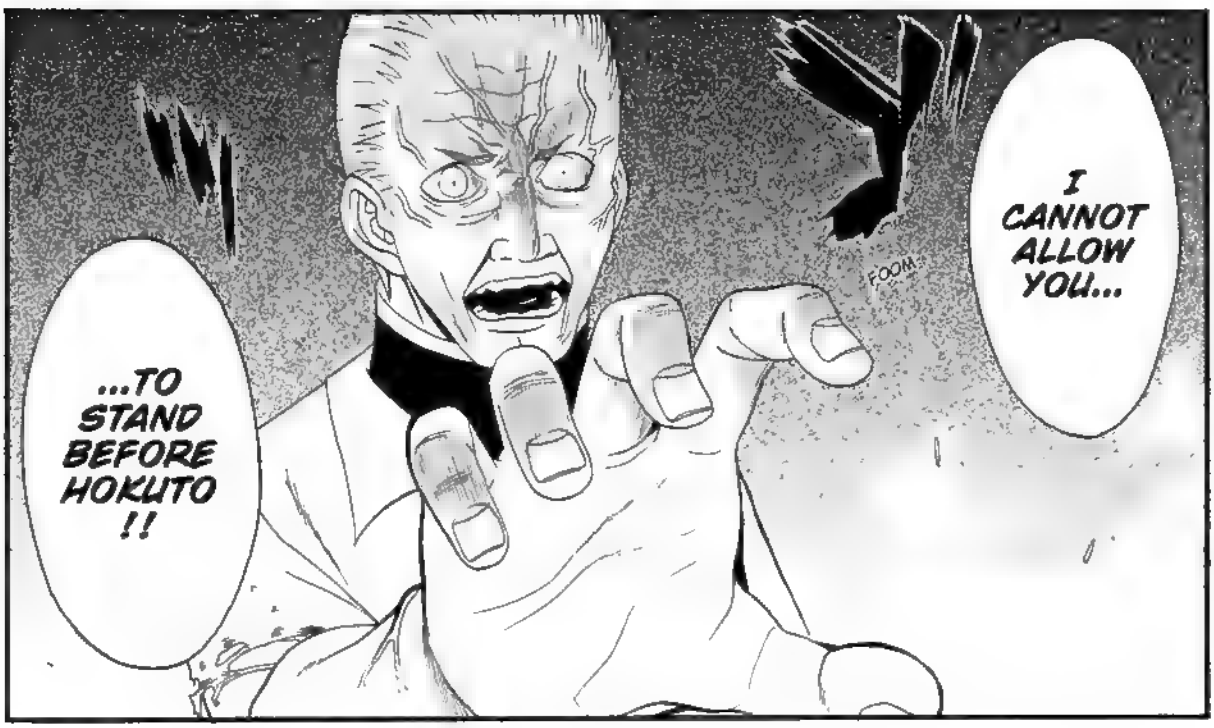
CRACK
NO MATTER HOW STRONG YOU THINK YOUR CURSE IS...
CRACK
CRACK
NO MATTER HOW STRONG A LOCALE YOU BUILD ...
CRACK
SHATTER
...WILL SMASH IT ALL TO BITS.
...MY OWN CURSE ...
SWIRL
...THAT MUCH IS ABSOLUTE !!
AS LONG AS YOU'RE IN THE SEVEN STARS...

.....
INCREDIBLE..!!
SHE SHATTERED... HIS LOCALE .....
HOSHIMURA-SAN.....
...THAT YOU'RE A HOPELESS FOOL BEYOND ANY HOPE OF REDEMPTION .....
GRIND
.....I SEE.
YOU'VE MADE IT CLEAR...
YOU MIGHT ALSO SAY... THAT REPEATED USE OF A CURSE SHAPES THE FORMS WE TAKE..... JUST AS WITH EVOLUTIONARY ADAPTATION IN NATURE...
CURSES ...
...ARE EMBODIMENTS OF OUR SAGA..... OF OUR VERY EXISTENCE.

...AND TURNING INTO A BEING WHO EXISTS FOR NO REASON OTHER THAN TO KILL THE SEVEN STARS.
NOW..... YOU'RE THROWING AWAY ALL YOU ARE...

...THAT IS WHY... I MUST KILL YOU NOW .....
SO FOOL- ISH .....
..... YET...

YEP .....
...AND I'M FINE WITH THAT.


I CANNOT ALLOW YOU...
FOOM
...TO STAND BEFORE HOKUTO !!

WHOOSH
ZOOM
!!
RUMBLE
RUMBLE
RUMBLE
WHAT'S THAT?

...WAS A MIRACLE WHO APPEARED TO ME IN MY DAYS OF BOREDOM AND ANGUISH.
TWINGE
TWINGE
HOKUTO ...

...BY PLACING PEOPLE IN CAGES TO BE TOYED WITH AND TORN APART BY BEASTS.
BUT ONCE THEY WERE DEAD, MY BOREDOM WOULD RETURN .....
I WOULD TRY TO ENJOY MYSELF .....
CRUNCH
SPLURT

THE SUCCESSES AND WEALTH I AMASSED IN LIFE.....WERE MEANINGLESS IN THE FACE OF DECREPITUDE AND DEATH .....

BUT..... HOKUTO WAS DIFFERENT.
HEH HEH .....
I MET HOKUTO..... I WAS KILLED AND TURNED INTO A SHIKA-BANE.
FOR THE FIRST TIME, MY HEART WAS RELEASED FROM ITS CAGE OF BOREDOM.
YES .....
KILLING BOREDOM IS THE ESSENCE OF MY SAGA...!!
WHA —?
AHH .....
LOOK .....
...ENDLESS, INEXHAUSTIBLE STIMULATION .....
RUMBLE
RUMBLE
RUMBLE
TO ME, HOKUTO PROVIDES ...
I WON'T LET ANYONE KILL HOKUTO.
FOOM
LEAST OF ALL.....A TIRESOME FOOL LIKE YOU.

NOW .....!

BE DESTROYED !!

WHOOSH

...FOR HOKUTO'S SAKE!!

WE AND OUR SAGA EXIST .....

ユダ

FWOOM

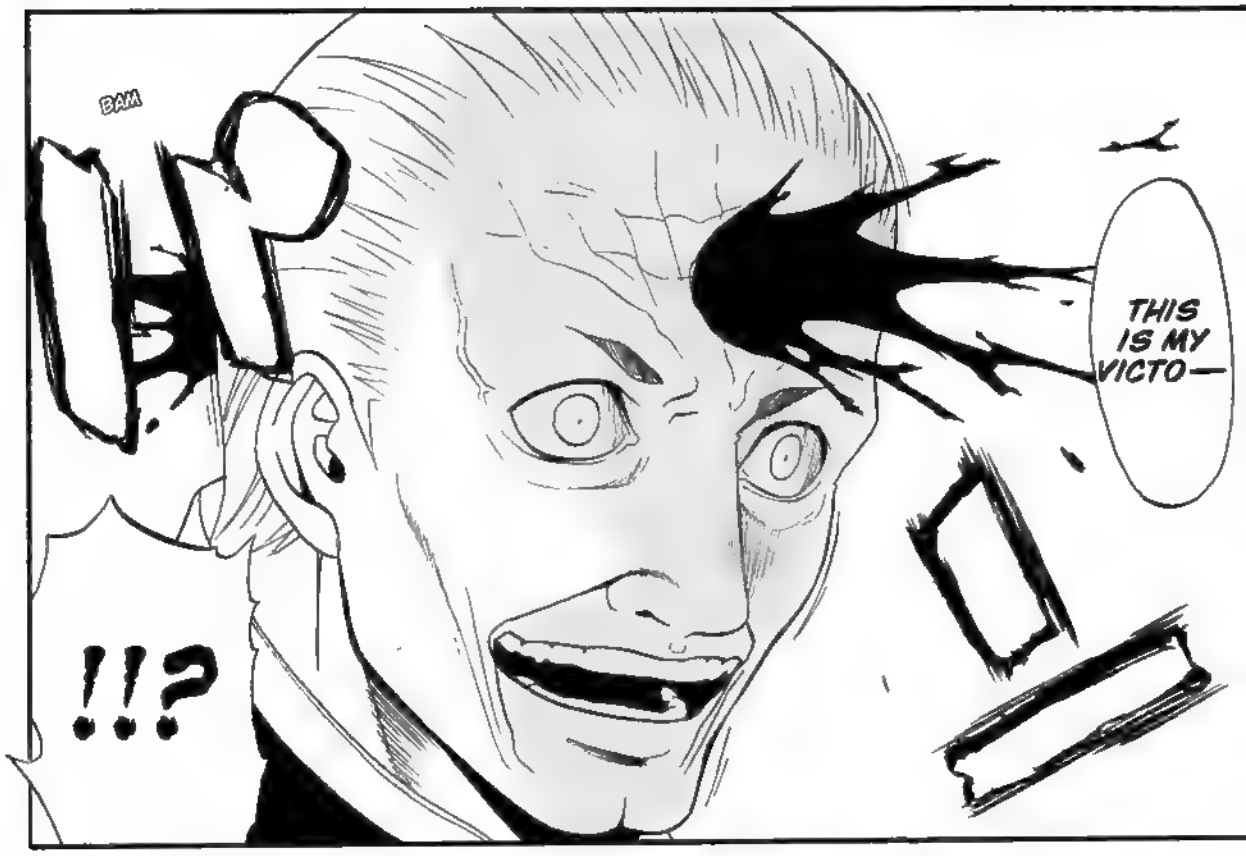
CRACK

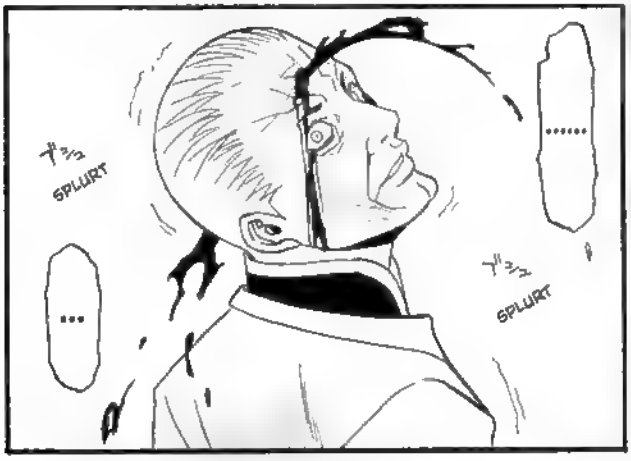
WE AND OUR SAGA EXIST .....

NOW .....!
BE DESTROYED !!
WHOOSH
...FOR HOKUTO'S SAKE!!
FWOOM
CRACK

RUMBLE
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
SPLIT
CRACK
RIP
TEAR
WHOOSH
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM

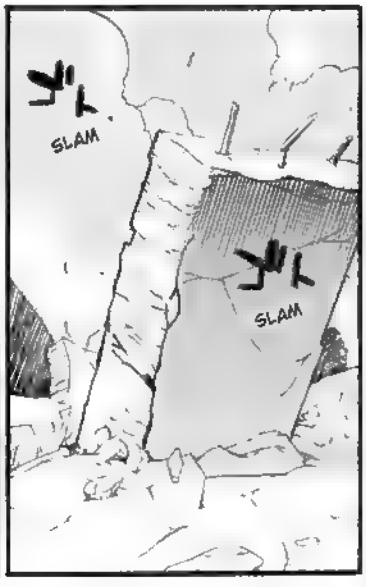
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
RUMBLE
!!
HO-
SHI—
...
...!!
RUMBLE
RUMBLE
RUMBLE
RUMBLE
RUMBLE
RUMBLE
RUMBLE
RUMBLE
RUMBLE
NO MATTER HOW FAST YOU DESTROY IT, I WILL OUTPACE AND CRUSH YOU...!!
WHAT NOW!? THIS MASS REPRESENTS THE ENTIRETY OF MY CAGE.....!!
HEH HEH ..... HA HA HA!!


BAM
!!?
THIS IS MY VICTO—


SPLURT
...
.....
SPLURT

EH ...!?
!!

SLAM


SLAM
SLAM

SMASH
CRACK
CRACK

SPIT
Y-YOU .....!!
I...SEE..... YOU...CARVED A PATH THROUGH MY CAGE... THROUGH THE BUILDING, WITH YOUR CURSE AND GUNS...
FSSHH
THIS BATTLE'S OVER, ISAKA OF THE SEVEN STARS.
THAT'S RIGHT.
FLEK
NO..... NOT... YET.
WHA —?
WHAT ...?
STRAIN
...YOU CAN'T USE YOUR CURSE ANY-MORE.
WITH YOUR BRAIN DE-STROYED ...

LET'S SEE WHO'S FASTER.
SHIFT
SHIFT
OH .....?
ALL RIGHT... A DUEL, THEN?
SHIFT
SHIFT
.....
... ABOUT HOW FAST YOU CAN BUILD YOUR LOCALE?
YOU REALLY THAT CONFIDENT ...
WHOOSH

FLIK
BURST
BOOM
STAB
SPLATTER
... 'COS I KNEW I COULD WIN.
I GAVE YOU THAT "CHANCE" ...
..... IDIOT.

CORPSE PRINCESS
PRODUCTION HELPERS:

NIJOU-TSUAN
KATOU-SAN
OOSUMI-KUN
YOSHIOKA-SAN
TSUJI-SAN
YAMANAKA-SAN
USAMI-SAN

SUPERVISOR: SHIMIZU

AND THANKS TO ALL THE READERS OUT THERE!

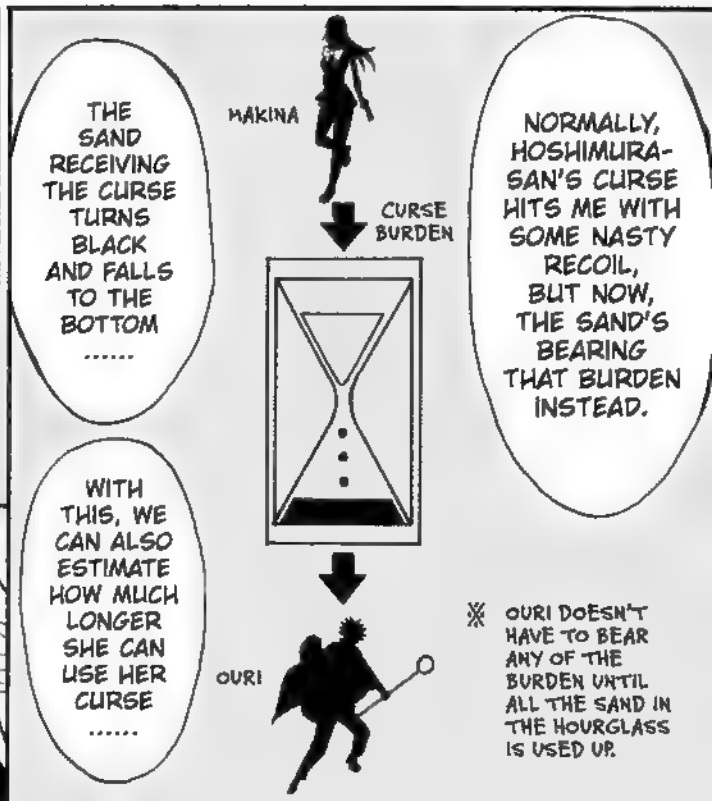
SHATTER
DEATH 48:
OPERATION SEALED DEITY
(PART 3)
RUMBLE
RUMBLE
RUMBLE
RUMBLE
IN-
CREDI-
BLE
.....!
SHE
SOUNDLY
DEFEATED
THAT SEVEN
STARS
MEMBER
.....!!
HAA
.....
THUD
CHACK
HOSHI-
MURA-
SAN!!
SKID
SKID
SKID
.....
I'M
FINE
.....
HOW
MUCH
IS
LEFT
.....?

RUSTLE
UMM...LOOKS LIKE ABOUT HALF. WHICH MEANS TEN MINUTES, GIVE OR TAKE..... NO. SIX OR SEVEN.....
.....!
CRACK
CRACK
.....
MORE THAN ENOUGH.

RIKA-SAN TAUGHT ME HOW TO PURIFY SAND AND PROTECT MYSELF FROM CURSES.
THIS IS ALL WE COULD MAKE OVER THE COURSE OF THREE DAYS, THOUGH...
YEAH..... HEALING SAND.
OURI..... IS THE SAND IN THAT HOURGLASS REALLY...?

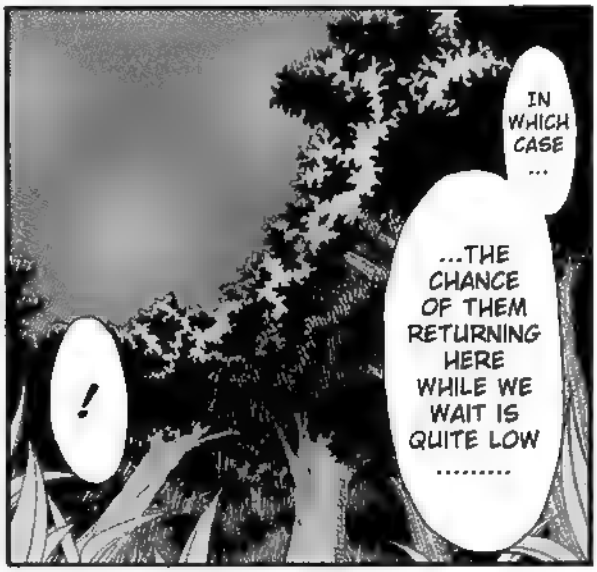
THERE ARE STILL FOUR MEMBERS OF THE SEVEN STARS LEFT .....
SO THAT'S ABOUT SIX OR SEVEN MINUTES NOW .....?
THIS WILL BE TIGHT..... BUT, THAT'S NEEDLESS TO SAY, AT THIS POINT.

!
THE OTHERS ARE ALREADY INSIDE .....


THE SAND RECEIVING THE CURSE TURNS BLACK AND FALLS TO THE BOTTOM .....
MAKINA
CURSE BURDEN
NORMALLY, HOSHIMURA-SAN'S CURSE HITS ME WITH SOME NASTY RECOIL, BUT NOW, THE SAND'S BEARING THAT BURDEN INSTEAD.
WITH THIS, WE CAN ALSO ESTIMATE HOW MUCH LONGER SHE CAN USE HER CURSE .....
OURI
※ OURI DOESN'T HAVE TO BEAR ANY OF THE BURDEN UNTIL ALL THE SAND IN THE HOURGLASS IS USED UP.

HOLD ON.....IF THE LOCALE IS BREAKING DOWN, THEN WHERE ARE OUR COMRADES?
.....OH, RIGHT.
.....
MOST LIKELY...IT'S LIKE BACK AT THE SCHOOL. SPACE WAS ALL WARPED IN THE LOCALE, SO THEY MIGHT'VE BEEN SHIFTED SOMEWHERE ELSE.
CRACK
CRACK

SHIRAE-SAN.....!! WHAT ABOUT THE OTHER INVESTIGATORS .....?
YES..... THERE WERE ABOUT THIRTY OF THEM ON THIS MISSION ...
!


IN WHICH CASE ...
...THE CHANCE OF THEM RETURNING HERE WHILE WE WAIT IS QUITE LOW .....
!

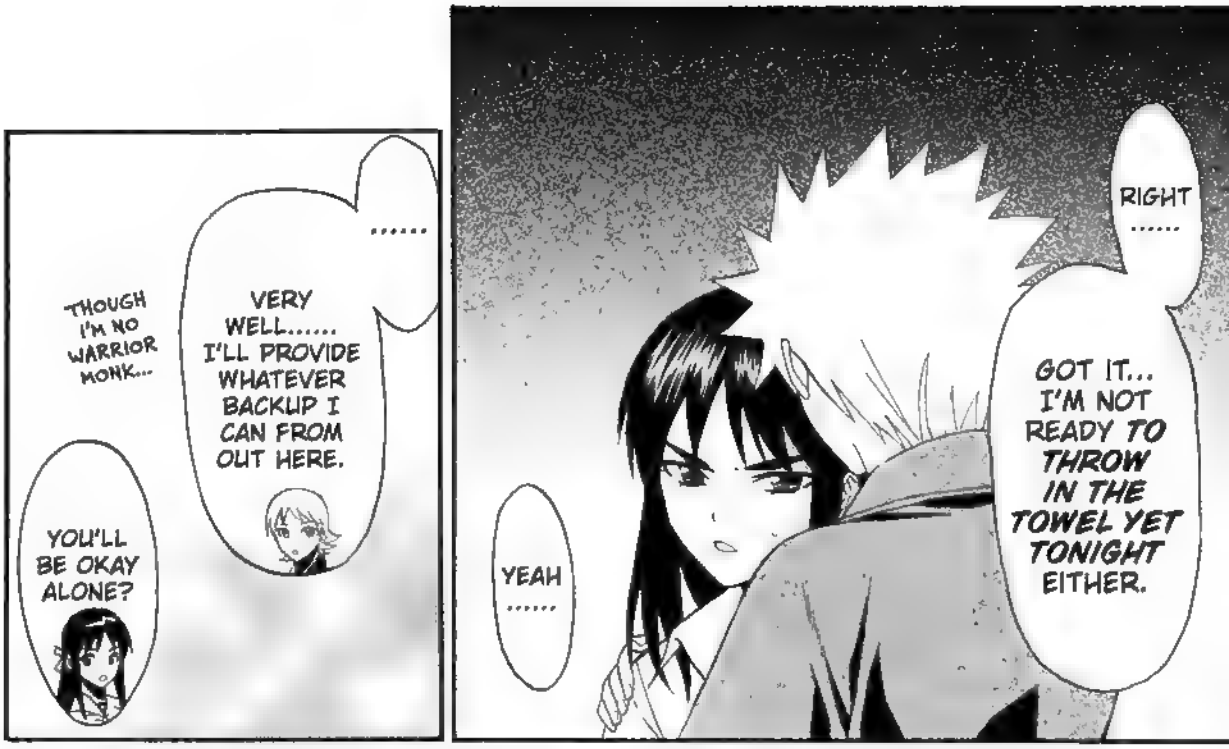
HOWEVER... THE ASSASSINATION OF THE KING TAKES TOP PRIORITY..... WE CAN'T SACRIFICE PERSONNEL TO GO PROTECT THEM.
AND THEY SHOULD BE HEAVILY ARMED, AT THAT...
MY PEOPLE WERE MEANT TO PROVIDE SUPPORT, BUT NOW THEY'RE TRAPPED AND MERELY GETTING IN THE WAY.....

WE'LL HEAD IN AND RESCUE THE INVESTI-GATORS.
FROM THE START..... OUR JOB WAS TO PROTECT YOU, SHIRAE-SAN.....
STEP
...LET US TAKE CARE OF THEM.
...IN THAT CASE ...

OF COURSE... I WOULDN'T NORMALLY MIX BUSINESS WITH PERSONAL MATTERS, BUT...
CRACK
I'M FINE.
YOUR BODY...
HOSHI-MURA-SAN .....

...AND THAT'S JUST PERFECT, FOR ME.
FROM WHAT ISAKA SAID, THE OTHER SEVEN STARS MEMBERS ARE GUARDING THIS PLACE.....

!!
HOSHI-MURA-SAN.
!
SLUMP
ヨロッ
.....
STUMBLE
ヒョロ
PLUS... I STILL ...
!
.....I'M FINE. JUST A LITTLE DIZZY .....
SQUEEZE
ギュッ..
.....


RIGHT
.....
GOT IT... I'M NOT READY TO THROW IN THE TOWEL YET TONIGHT EITHER.
YEAH
.....
.....
VERY WELL..... I'LL PROVIDE WHATEVER BACKUP I CAN FROM OUT HERE.
THOUGH I'M NO WARRIOR MONK...
YOU'LL BE OKAY ALONE?

?
FUR-THER-MORE .....
NOT NECESSARILY... BUT THIS SEEMS FAR SAFER THAN GOING INSIDE.

!?
I WOULDN'T WANT... TO COME BETWEEN YOU TWO.....OR PROVE.....AN UNNECESSARY BURDEN.
MMM.
.....
MMM...
YOU, UH .....
AHEM.

I JUST..... HOSHIMURA-SAN, WITH YOUR SLENDER SHOULDERS, FRAGRANT HAIR, AND WHATNOT...
STARE
WRIGGLE
WRIGGLE
YOU WERE TOTALLY LIKE...
NO!!
WAIT!! THAT'S NOT IT!! I HELD ON TO YOU JUST NOW 'COS... I WAS SHOCKED, IS ALL .....
WHAA —!?
FLINCH
...AN ORDINARY GIRL...
CRUNCH
IT MAY NOT WORK, BUT TAKE THIS RADIO.
... ANY-HOW ...
...I'M TRUSTING YOU TWO IN THERE.
...YOU KIND OF DESERVED THAT AFTER RUNNING YOUR MOUTH, OURI...
WELL ...
POW
AHH!

OKAY.
.....
LET'S GO, OURI.
THANKS.

...WAS THAT HOSHIMURA-SAN'S SHOULDERS WERE TREMBLING.
RIGHT... WHAT SURPRISED ME A SECOND AGO.....
STEP

EVEN WHEN GRIPPED BY FEAR, SHE OVERCOMES IT WITH STRENGTH OF WILL.....
BUT I GUESS THAT ACTUALLY PROVES HOW STRONG HER DETERMINATION IS.....
CHAK

SO BRIGHT.....!
AHH.....
.....BUT THAT'S WRONG. THAT'S NOT WHAT MAKES HER STRONG..... I KNOW FOR SURE.....
...I'LL REGRET, RESENT, CURSE IT ALL, AND GET STRONGER.
SO...
THESE UNDYING CORPSE PRINCESSES... THEY'RE CREATED FOR THE SOLE PURPOSE OF KILLING SHIKABANE. BY NATURE, THEY'RE ABERRATIONS..... I GET THAT .....
SHUT UP!!!

...IS THE BRIGHT, SHINING, YET HEARTRENDING STRENGTH OF HER DETERMINATION .....

A CORPSE PRINCESS'S STRENGTH... HOSHIMURA-SAN'S STRENGTH.....

I CAN KEEP GOING ...
THE REAL TEST STARTS NOW!!
AND WE'RE SEEING IT THROUGH 'TIL THE END.
RUB

EH!?
GASP
AH... 'COURSE NOT...
.....?
WHAT'S WRONG? TUCKERED OUT?

YEAH.
I'M COUNTING ON YOU.

I'M .....
.....!

WHOOSH
BOOM
KEE KEE .....
KEE.
...!
!!
WRAP
PULL
ITSUKI ...!!
THUNK
THUNK
!!
PIERCE

!!
WHAP
RIP
DIE... YOU !!
CRUSH
UHHH!!
HAA.
HAA ...
ITSUKI!!
BOOM
BOOM

ALL RIGHT ...!
LET'S KEEP MOVING .....
!
YOU OKAY !?
YEAH .....
THANKS...
STILL BACK THERE
WHY NOT TAKE A BREATHER UNTIL OUR MASTERS CATCH UP .....?
IN-DEED.
LAND
スタッ
YOU'RE GETTING AHEAD OF YOURSELF.
HOLD UP, "GEN-PAKU."

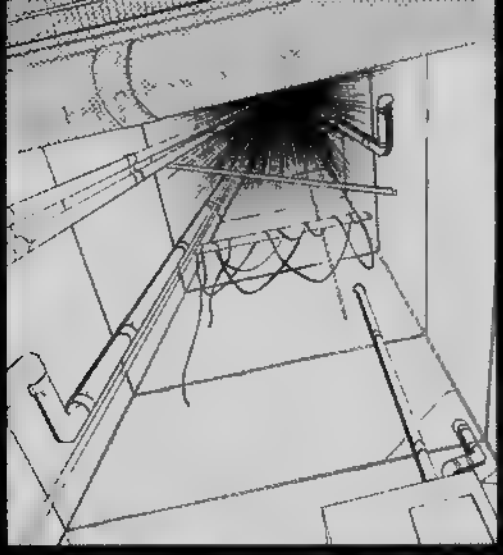
.....
ITSUKI .....
TUG
!
SIGH.
GOOD GRIEF.
...YOU MUST BELIEVE IN THE VALUE OF THIS STRATEGIC GROUND-WORK. WE OUGHT TO BE COOP-ERATING.
AND THAT'S WHY .....
GEN-PAKU .....
WE ALL WANT TO DEFEAT THE KING. OUR SENSE OF DUTY IS AS STRONG AS YOURS.
!
TMP
OUR HEARTS ARE ONE..... WITH UMEHARA-SENSEI'S PLAN..... TRUST US IN THAT.
THAT'S RIGHT, TAKAMASA-SAN.....
WHEEZE
WHEEZE
WHEEZE

...BUT FOR HIM, THE ROOT OF IT IS DIFFERENT THAN FOR THE OTHERS..... HIS "DUTY" IS TO ATONE .....

RIGHT... TAKAMASA..... IS MOTIVATED BY THAT SENSE OF DUTY NOW .....

UMEHARA-SENSEI... DEFINITELY SAW IT.....
TAKAMASA'S HEART.....
THAT'S WHY..... EARLIER ...
TAP
... HMPH.
I SEE.
CRACK
SPLENDID-LY DONE.
CRACK
CRACK
YEAH.
NICE TIMING TOO, FINISHING UP RIGHT WHEN I CRACKED THE LOCALE.
DRIP
WOULDN'T EXPECT LESS FROM THESE BIGSHOT PROTECTORS.

BAM



WARM-UP'S OVER.
LET'S GET OUTTA THIS LOCALE.
THE INVESTIGATORS TOO...

..... NOW THEN ...

NO ARGU-ING.
THIS IS THE MOST EFFICIENT STRATEGY.

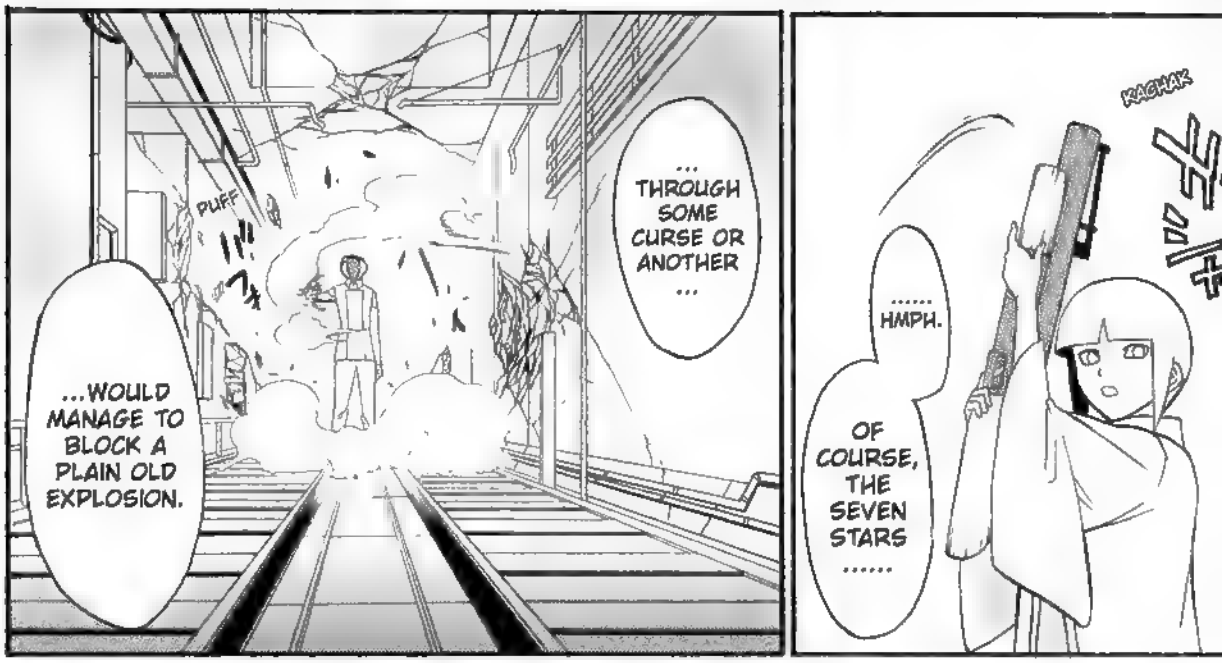
!?
MY SQUAD WILL TAKE DOWN THE KING IN THE END, WHILE THE REST OF YOU WILL PROVIDE DIVERSIONS.
...WE'LL BE BREAKING THROUGH WITH THREE SQUADS OF SIX, SIX, AND EIGHT.

EVEN IF WE HAVE TO MAKE SACRIFICES, KILLING THE KING IS THE ONLY WAY FOR THIS MISSION TO SUCCEED.
EVEN IF.....YOU LISTENING ?
FWOOSH
OUR INITIAL ASSAULT MAY HAVE HIT A ROADBLOCK, BUT THERE'S NO TURNING BACK NOW.
MOBILITY TAKES TOP PRIORITY AT THIS POINT.

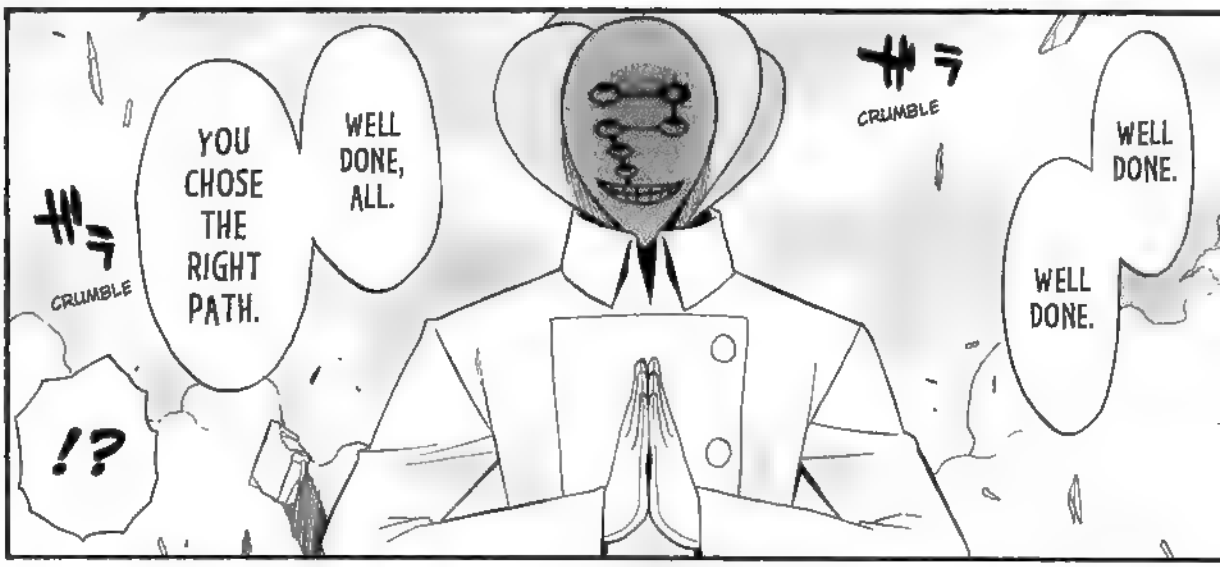
.....
THAT GOES WITHOUT SAYING.
UNDER-STOOD.
NOD
コク
.....
YEAH.
.....
TAKA-MASA..... YOU'RE ON A DIVERSION SQUAD.
LET ME GET THIS OUT OF THE WAY.....
OF COURSE, SENSEI! AND I'LL BE .....
ALL MY PLANNING AND GROUNDWORK WILL LEAD TO THE KING'S FALL, SO DO AS I SAY.
LIKE I SAID.....NO ARGUING.
!

TMP
SENSEI...
YES...
TAKAMASA
.....
CLANG
CLANG
CLANG
.....
THAT'S... PROBABLY WHY WE'RE IN THIS SQUAD...
I KNOW I'M WAY WEAKER THAN THE OTHER PROTECTORS'— CORPSE PRINCESSES
.....
!
WHOOSH

BANG
WHIRR
SEVEN STARS !!
FWIP
BALLOONS...? NO...THAT MARK MEANS...
FWISH
BOOM
!!
SU-GUKO ...!!
TAKE IT DOWN A NOTCH .....!!
UGH
UGH
.....!
CRACK

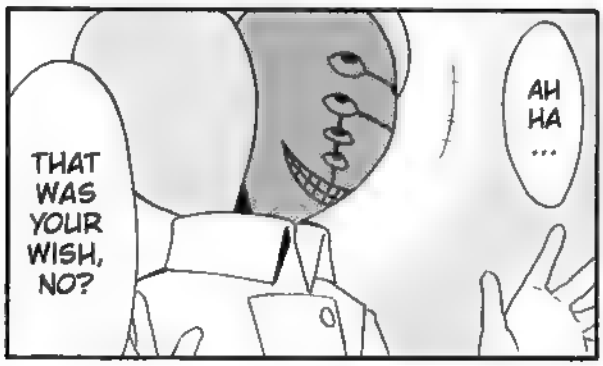

PUFF
...WOULD MANAGE TO BLOCK A PLAIN OLD EXPLOSION.
... THROUGH SOME CURSE OR ANOTHER ...
KACHAK
..... HMPH.
OF COURSE, THE SEVEN STARS .....

CLAP
CLAP
CLAP
CLAP
!?
CLAP


CRUMBLE
YOU CHOSE THE RIGHT PATH.
WELL DONE, ALL.
!?
CRUMBLE
WELL DONE.
WELL DONE.

...A FABULOUS PRIZE.
AND FOR THE WINNERS ...
WHAT .....?

WE WILL GUIDE YOU STRAIGHT TO THE KING.
!?

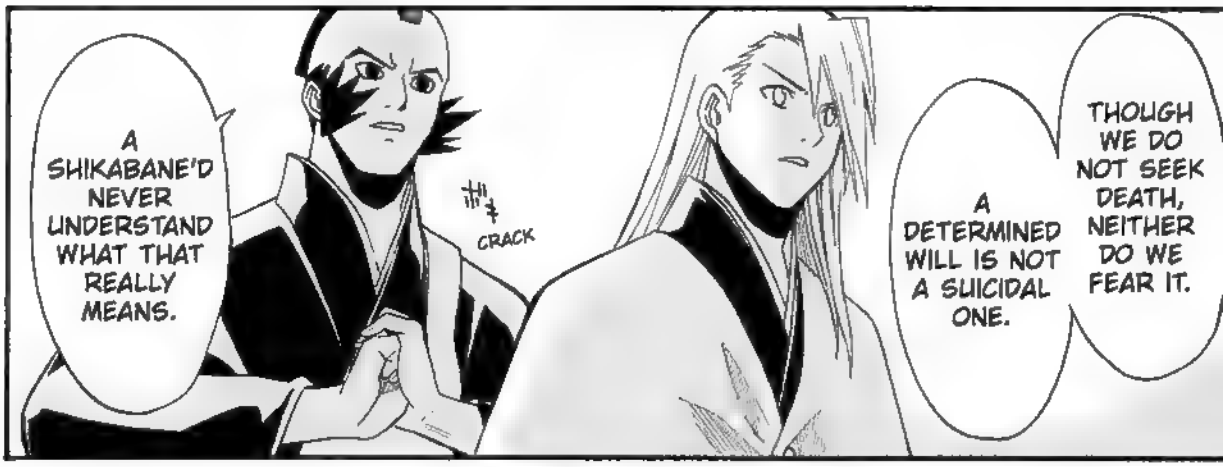

AH HA ...
THAT WAS YOUR WISH, NO?

.....
WHAT'S THE MEANING OF THIS .....?

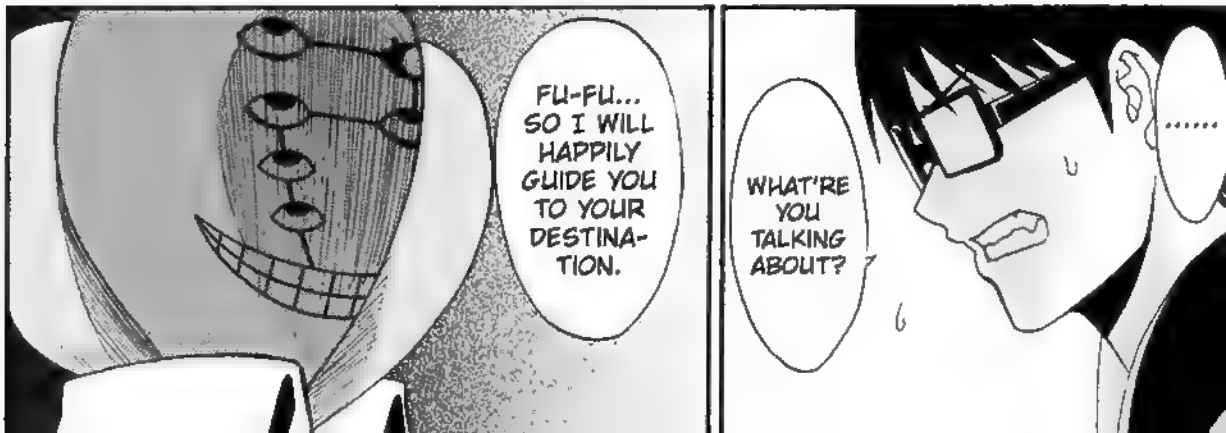
...!

TO DIE A SATISFYING DEATH BEFORE THE KING .....?
THAT WILL BRING YOU HAPPINESS .....
...WILL IT NOT .....?

GRAB
NOBODY HERE'S THINKING THAT AT ALL.
WHAT MAKES YOU THINK WE'RE LOOKING TO DIE, YOU BALLOON BASTARD?
YOU AN IDIOT ?
FWISH
WRONG... MR. SEVEN STARS.


A SHIKABANE'D NEVER UNDERSTAND WHAT THAT REALLY MEANS.
CRACK
A DETERMINED WILL IS NOT A SUICIDAL ONE.
THOUGH WE DO NOT SEEK DEATH, NEITHER DO WE FEAR IT.

I MOST DEFINITELY DETECT AMONG YOU THE SCENT OF ONE WHO SEEKS HAPPINESS IN DEATH.....
OH...IS THAT SO? .....BUT... HOW STRANGE.


FU-FU... SO I WILL HAPPILY GUIDE YOU TO YOUR DESTINA-TION.
WHAT'RE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
.....

STEP
SPIN
MY REGRETS ARE BORN FROM THE DESIRE TO SHARE HAPPINESS THROUGH DEATH.
BUT THE KING IS FAR BETTER SUITED THAN ME TO GIVE YOU WHAT YOU WANT.....

.....
IT'S A TRAP, RIGHT?
.....
IT ALMOST SEEMS TOO OBVIOUS THOUGH .....

SPIN SPIN
SPIN

HERE ...
THIS WAY.

!

BUT I GUESS WE SHOULD KEEP OUR DISTANCE AND FOLLOW.
.....
YEAH.

FWOOM

THE KING .....!!

WHOOSH

...I WELCOME YOU.

MY GOOD MONKS ...

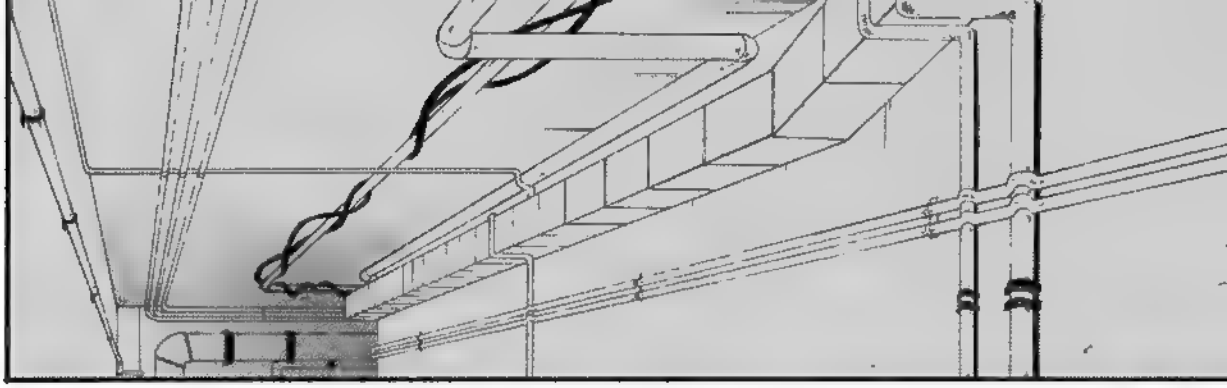
WHOOSH

WHOOSH

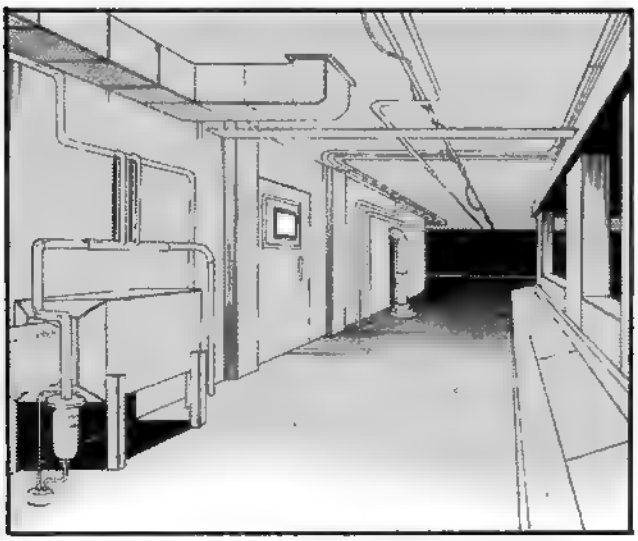
WHOOSH

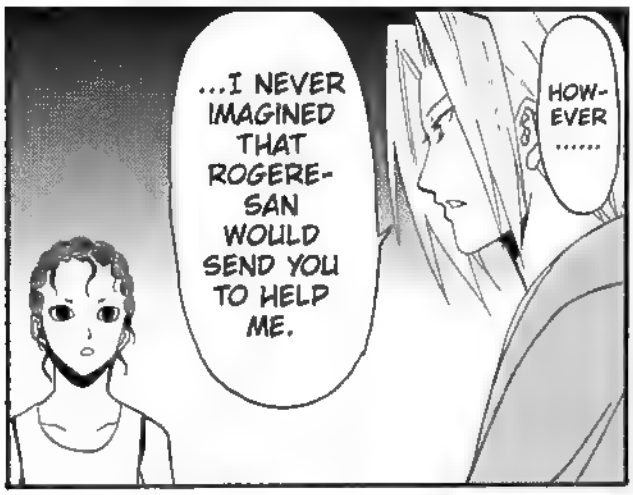
MY GOOD MONKS ...
WHOOSH
WHOOSH
WHOOSH

FWOOM
...I WELCOME YOU.
WHOOSH
THE KING .....!!



CLOSE
...ALL MY PREPARATIONS ARE IN ORDER.
..... NOW...




...I NEVER IMAGINED THAT ROGERE-SAN WOULD SEND YOU TO HELP ME.
HOW-EVER .....

NOW .....
...I JUST WAIT FOR THE KOUGON SECT'S ATTACK, AT WHICH POINT I WILL USE THE CHAOS TO MAKE MY ESCAPE ...

...BE-CAUSE... YOU PROM-ISED...
...THAT YOU... WILL... RESCUE HIM.....
MA... STER KNOWS ...

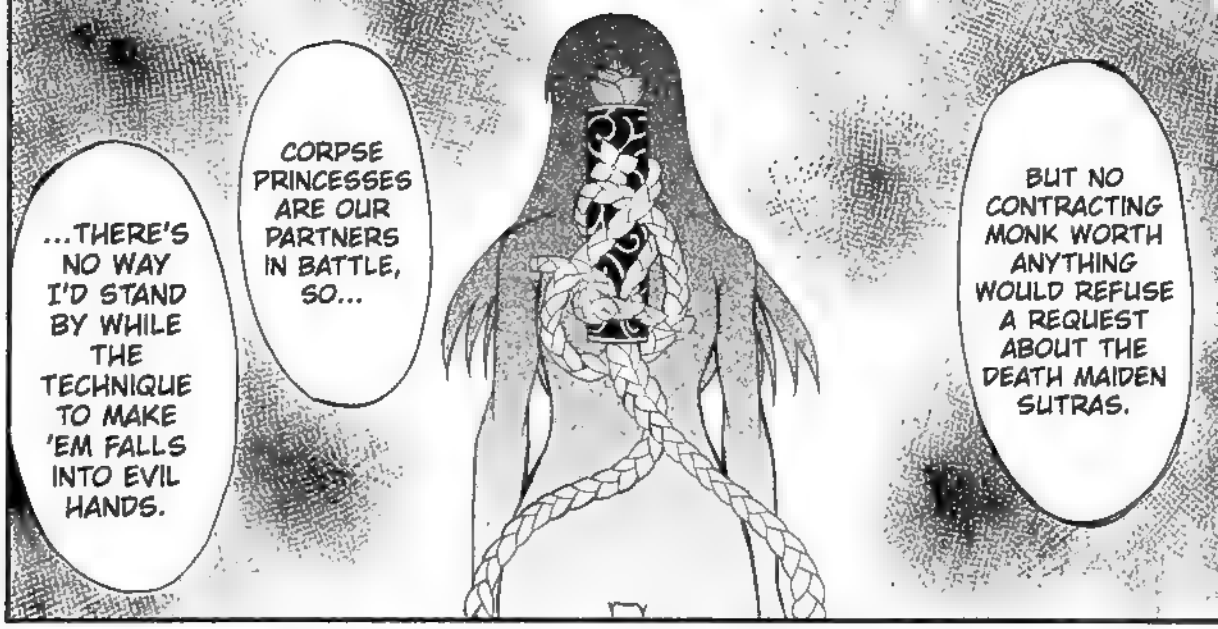
!
NOW I ONLY FEAR I MAY FAIL HIM .....
HE TRUSTS ME THAT MUCH .....
.....
IAN-KUN..... PLEASE STAND BACK.
.....
CREEP
CREEP
CREEP
UNFURL
FLAP
CLICK

BAM
FWISH
TURN
!!
KACHAK

!!
KABLAM
BURST
SHINK
SKID
.....!
SKID
SKID
SKID
WHOOSH
WHOOM
KACHAK
KABLAM
BURST
THAT CORPSE PRINCESS, SHE'S—!?
IAN!!

SHOO
!
DON'T TELL ME IT'S ...!!
DUAL KODACHI BLADES ...!?
JOLT
!!
SLASH

...SADA-HIRO-SAN!!
SLICE
I HEARD YOU FLED OVERSEAS FOUR YEARS AGO, BUT.....IT APPEARS YOUR SKILLS ARE AS SHARP AS EVER...
.....!
AKASHA .....
I CAN'T SAY I'M THRILLED OVER THIS REUNION.
THERE ARE..... SOME THINGS I NEED TO KNOW... BEFORE I HAVE MY REVENGE.
DRIP
SWIRL
YES. TWO THINGS.
FIRST...THE WHEREABOUTS OF ALL THOSE MATERIALS YOU STOLE. THE ONES RELATED TO THE DEATH MAIDEN SUTRAS .....
THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW?
.....I SEE.
YOU'RE HERE ON THE GONDAI-SOUJOU'S ORDERS, THEN...
AND IS IT WITH HIS AUTHORITY... THAT YOU'RE EXECUTING THIS SOLO MISSION?
..... S'POSE SO.


...THERE'S NO WAY I'D STAND BY WHILE THE TECHNIQUE TO MAKE 'EM FALLS INTO EVIL HANDS.
CORPSE PRINCESSES ARE OUR PARTNERS IN BATTLE, SO...
BUT NO CONTRACTING MONK WORTH ANYTHING WOULD REFUSE A REQUEST ABOUT THE DEATH MAIDEN SUTRAS.

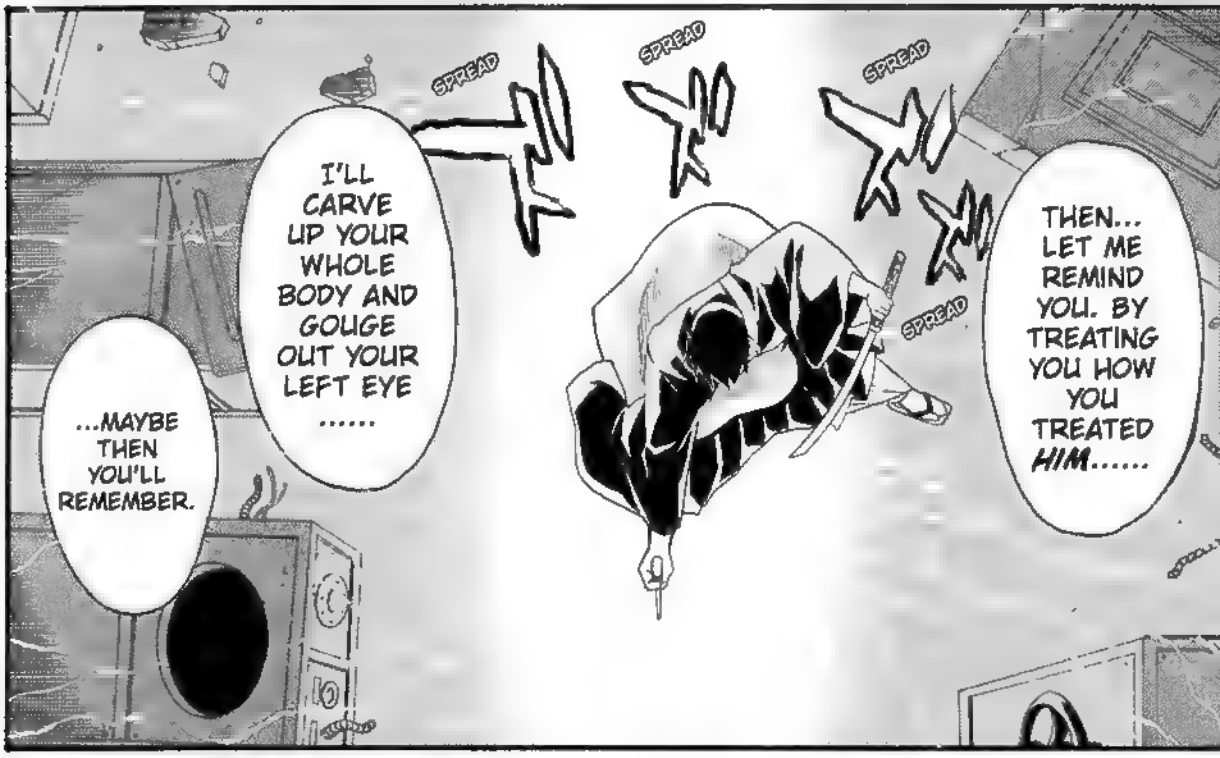
.....
...WHEN IT COMES TO SOMEONE WHO LOVES HIS OWN CORPSE PRINCESS.
EVEN MORE SO .....

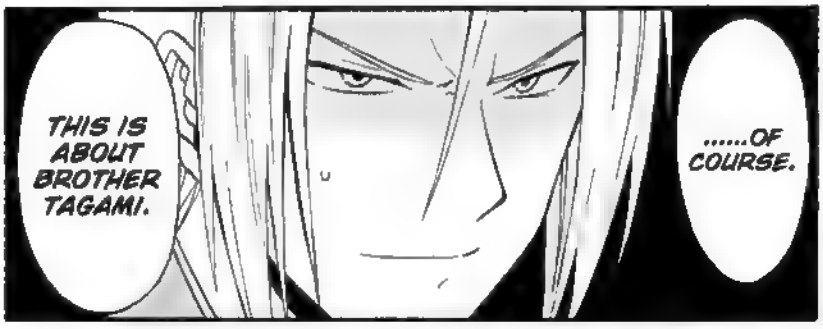
NUHH .....!!
CRAKL
CRAKL
CRAKL

SLAM

BIZARRE LOTUS!!
FWOOM
!!

.....
YOU'VE ...
...SAID A BIT TOO MUCH.
TMP
...I'VE GOTTA ASK YOU ABOUT.
ONE MORE THING ...
NOPE, NOT YET .....
FLICKERING HEAVEN CLEAVER!!
SEALED MANDALA.
YOU MEAN YOU DON'T KNOW?
FWOOM
WHAT WOULD THAT BE?
?
STAB


SPREAD
SPREAD
SPREAD
SPREAD
I'LL CARVE UP YOUR WHOLE BODY AND GOUGE OUT YOUR LEFT EYE .....
...MAYBE THEN YOU'LL REMEMBER.
THEN... LET ME REMIND YOU. BY TREATING YOU HOW YOU TREATED HIM.....

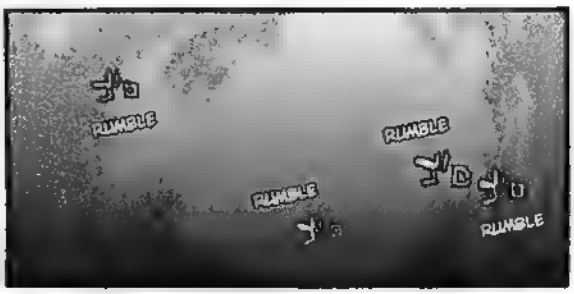

THIS IS ABOUT BROTHER TAGAMI.
.....OF COURSE.

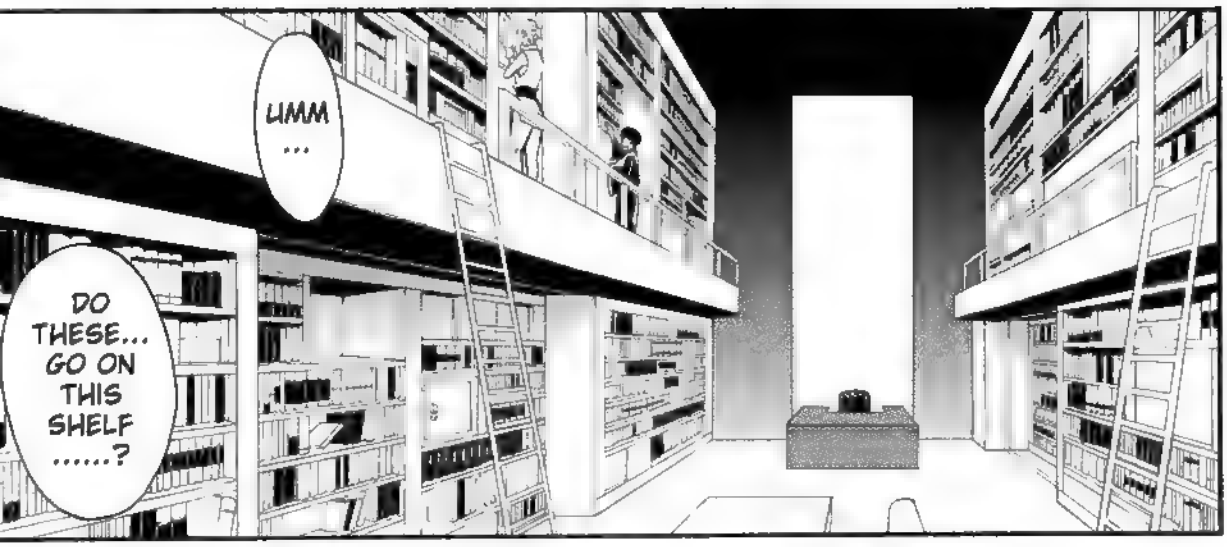
DRIP

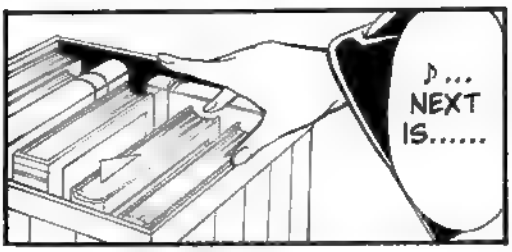
STAND
YOU'LL SPILL EVERY-THING.
EVERYTHING YOU REMEMBER .....
...I'LL RIP IT STRAIGHT OUT OF YOUR ENTRAILS.

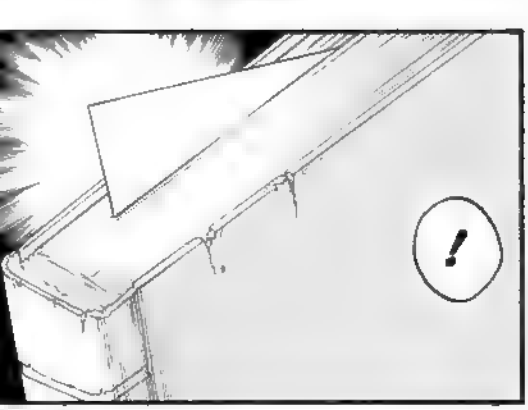
DEATH 49:
OPERATION SEALED DEITY
(PART 4)

DRIP
DRIP
DRIP

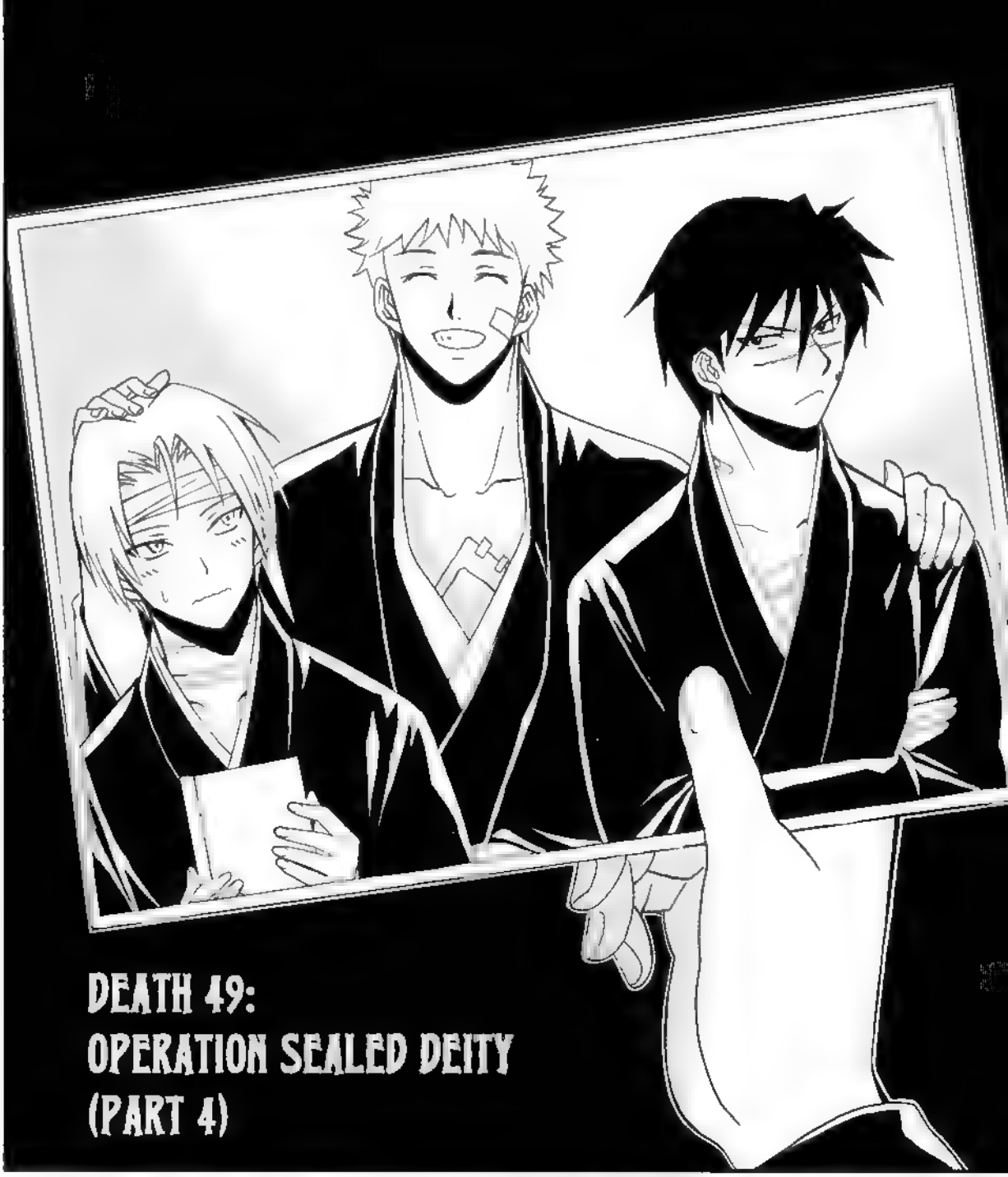

RUMBLE
RUMBLE
RUMBLE
RUMBLE


UMM...
DO THESE... GO ON THIS SHELF.....?

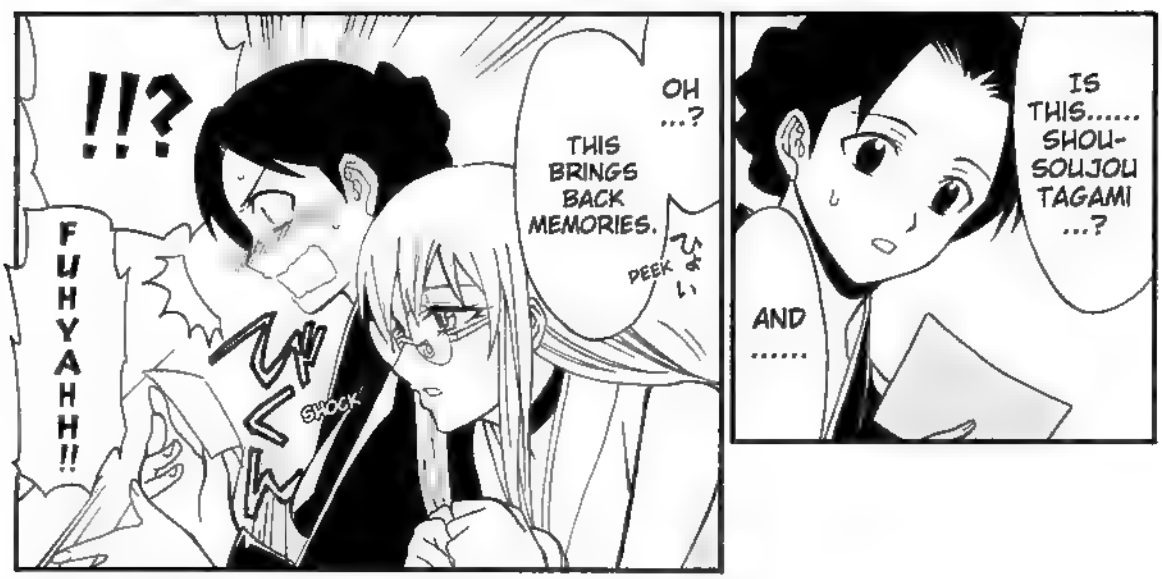

♪... NEXT IS.....


!

SORRY. BEYOND GUARDING ME, YOU'RE EVEN HELPING ME TIDY UP TAKAMINE-SAMA'S PERSONAL QUARTERS...
I STILL CAN'T TAKE THESE CUFFS OFF...
NO TROUBLE AT ALL.
U FU FU.
HON-ESTLY, I WISH THIS NIGHT WOULD NEVER END. ♡



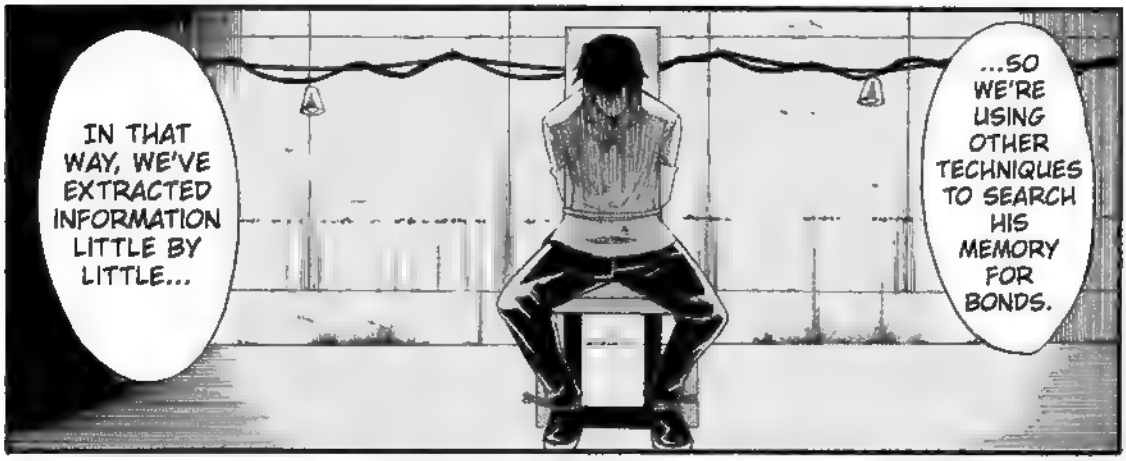
DEATH 49: OPERATION SEALED DEITY (PART 4)

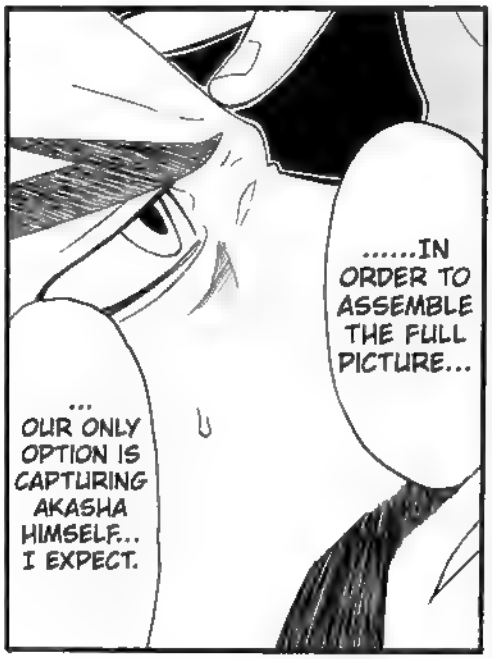


U-UMM.
WHO ARE THE TWO NEXT TO SHOU-SOUJOU TAGAMI IN THIS PICTURE ...?
.....
WHAT'S WRONG ?
N-NOTHING. I'M FINE .....
THAT WAS A WEIRD SHOUT.
?
GON-SOUJOU SADAHIRO MIBU.....
... AND ...
...THE TRAITOR MONK..... FORMER GONSHOU-SOUJOU AKASHA SHISHIDOU .....
THE TRAITOR MONK...
.....!!
BUT THAT ...
...WAS LONG AGO .....
!
TAKA-MINE-SAMA.

AS EXPECTED OF A BOKOR... HE'S HARDENED HIMSELF AGAINST INTERRO-GATION TACTICS.
CREAK
EVEN WHEN DRUGGED, HE REFUSES TO TALK FOR THE MOST PART...

IT'S BEEN A LONG DAY.
HOW'S IT GOING WITH THE BOKOR'S INTERRO-GATION ...?
MMM .....
LITTLE PROG-RESS, I'M AFRAID .....


IN THAT WAY, WE'VE EXTRACTED INFORMATION LITTLE BY LITTLE...
...SO WE'RE USING OTHER TECHNIQUES TO SEARCH HIS MEMORY FOR BONDS.

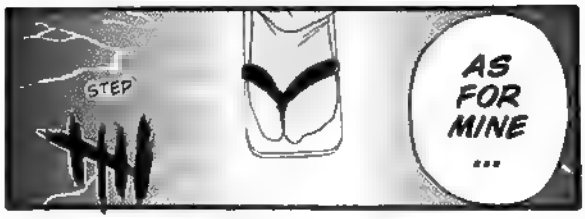

.....IN ORDER TO ASSEMBLE THE FULL PICTURE...
... OUR ONLY OPTION IS CAPTURING AKASHA HIMSELF... I EXPECT.

...BUT IN REGARD TO THE ALL-IMPORTANT *METHOD OF TRANSPORT*..... THAT IS, *HOW THEY'RE PLANNING TO MOVE THE SEALED KING TO YAMA CITY* FOR THE INVASION...WE'VE UNCOVERED NOTHING TO SPEAK OF.
SIGH.
..... WHICH MEANS ...
...IT'S LIKELY HE GENUINELY DOESN'T KNOW.

HE WAS MY APPRENTICE.
AND HE WAS ...A FOOL.
THE TRAITOR MONK...
DO YOU... KNOW HIM... TAKAMINE-SAMA.....?
BUT... ALL OF THAT .....
...IS IN THE PAST. WHAT'S DONE IS DONE.....

SLASH
I'M NOT A CHILD LIKE YOU...
...SHOWING OFF YOUR POWERS TO ANYONE WHO'LL LOOK.
HMPH... AND PROUD OF IT.

SWIRL
A SEALED MANDA-LA.....
THIS IS THE FIRST I'VE SEEN OF YOURS, SADAHIRO-SAN.
YOU'VE ALWAYS BEEN MISERLY WITH YOUR SECRETS.


STEP
AS FOR MINE ...

APPEAR

!!
WHOOSH
FLIK

SO FAST ……!!
WHAT THE…!?
…!
SLASH
TCH ……!!
TCH !!
TMP
FWISH
I ONLY SHOW THIS TO SHIKABANE WHO'RE ABOUT TO DIE.
STEP
!?
OF COURSE …
… YOU AIN'T LEAVING HERE ALIVE EITHER…… SO YOU GET TO SEE TOO.

!!
DON'T UNDER-ESTI-MATE ME!!
FWIP
SEE YA...
...AKA-SHA.
PRESS
FOOM
GRIND
!
FLIP
FLIP

...I SEE.
IT'S "HYPER-SONIC MOVE-MENT."
THAT'S YOUR SEALED MANDALA ABILITY.
CLINK
THUD
IDIOT.
DON'T GO DECIDING THINGS.
IT'S NOTHING SO SIMPLE AS THAT.
AKIRA.
MM?
FINISH OFF THAT SHIKABANE AND LEND ME A HAND.
I'LL FINISH HIM WITH MY NEXT RELEASE.
POINT
.....!
GUH...
TCH .....!
UNDER-STOOD.
CLICK

ビキッ
CRACK
SMASH
RUMBLE
RUMBLE
RUMBLE
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
!!?

!!
COULD IT BE.....?
THAT'S...!?
RUMBLE
RUMBLE
RUMBLE
RUMBLE
!
...SADAHIRO-SAN IS DISTRACTED !!
THAT BOY...NO... WAIT, MORE IMPORTANTLY ...
BIZARRE LOTUS!!
BURST
THIS IS MY CHANCE !!

LEAP
FWOOM
SLAM
!!
CHAK
BOOM
!!
CHAK
BOOM
BOOM
WHOOSH
TCH
!!
!!
IT'S SO THICK .....!!
SQUIRM

SQUIRM
.....
PHEW.
SQUIRM
...
TMP
GLATTER
RATTLE
IT SEEMS... WE DIDN'T FIND THE INSPECTORS, BUT WE DID FIND SOMETHING ELSE, OURI.
I KILLED IT.
BUT .....
KOFF .....
HOSHI-MURA... SAN. WHERE'S THE SHIKA-BANE .....!?
!

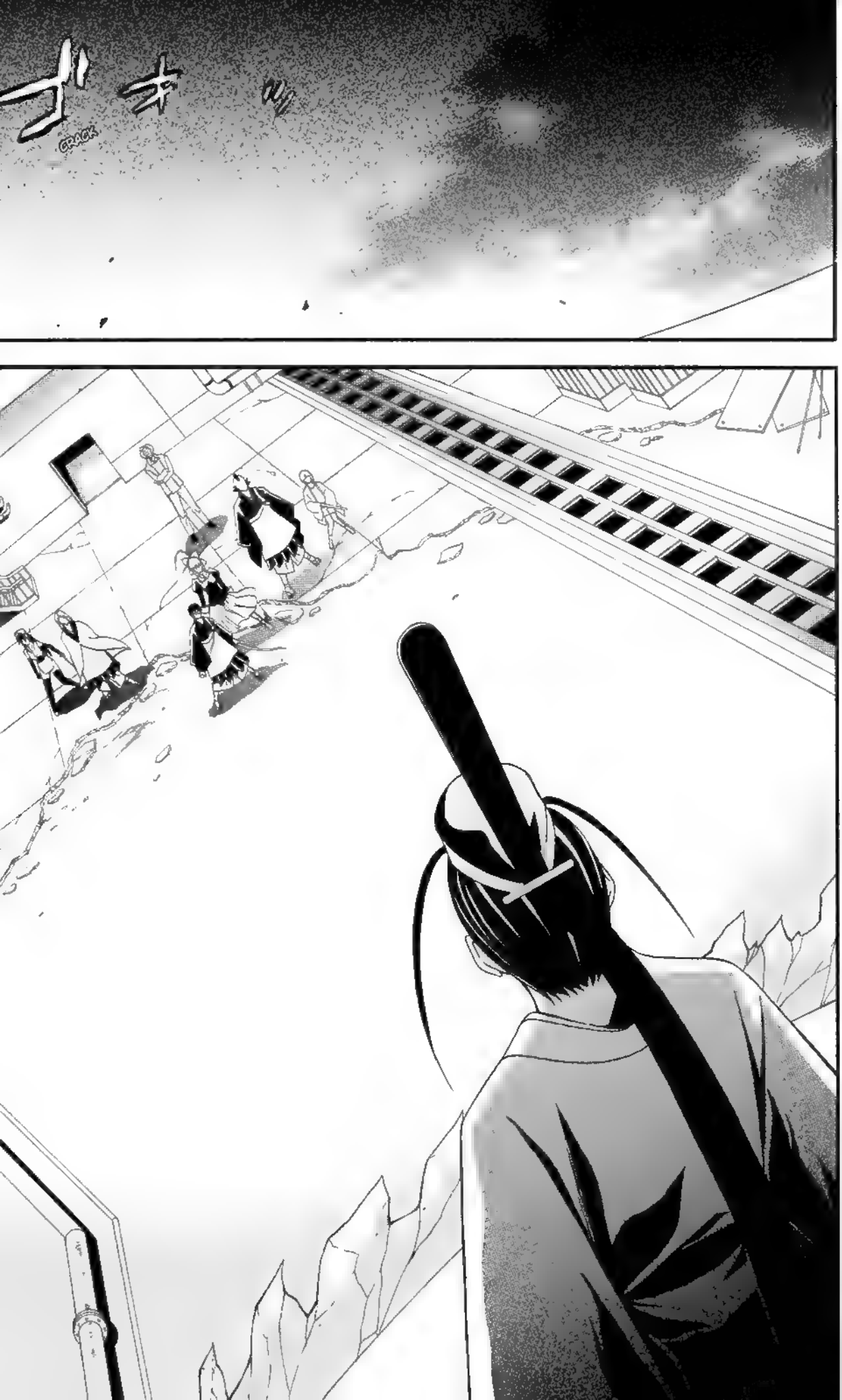
THEY'RE.....
MAKINA HOSHIMURA AND OURI KAGAMI.....?
.....
GOOD-NESS ...
SQUIRM
SQUIRM
WELL THEN, SADAHIRO-SAN...
...I SUPPOSE OUR BATTLE WILL HAVE TO BE DECIDED..... NEXT TIME.
SQUIRM
SQUIRM
ONE NUISANCE AFTER ANOTHER.
SQUIRM
CHAK
INDEED.
IN YOUR DREAMS.
CLICK
IDIOT.

CLICK

.....
YOU'RE ...
...
AKASHA, RIGHT?
.....?
HOSHI-MURA... SAN?

YOU'RE THE TRAITOR MONK .....!!
YOU ATTACKED KEISEI AT DAIRIN.
!!

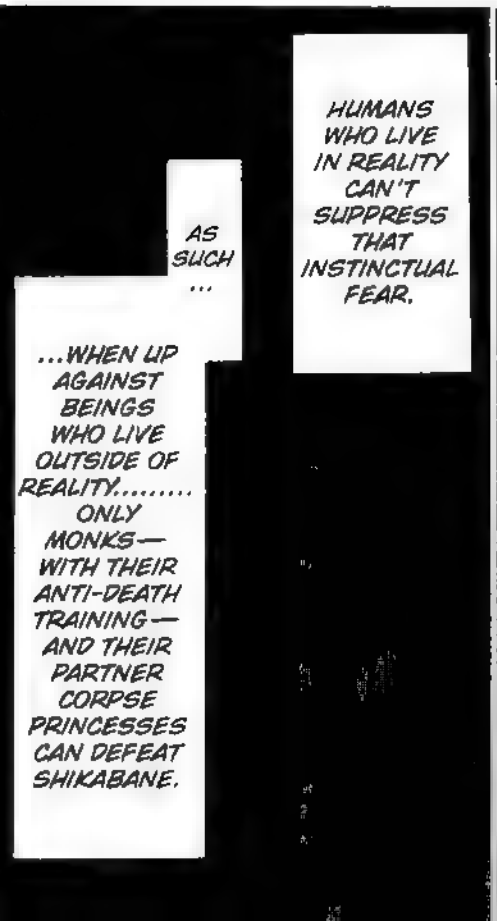
YOU, A CORPSE PRIN-CESS, KILL ME, A HUMAN?
SO..... YOU'RE GOING TO SHOOT ME DEAD ?
OHH .....
CLICK
...I'VE GOTTA TAKE YOU OUT .....!!
TO AVENGE HIM .....
CLICK
KILLING PEOPLE BECAUSE OF REGRETS ...
... THAT'S WHAT .....
... SHIKABANE DO.
CLICK

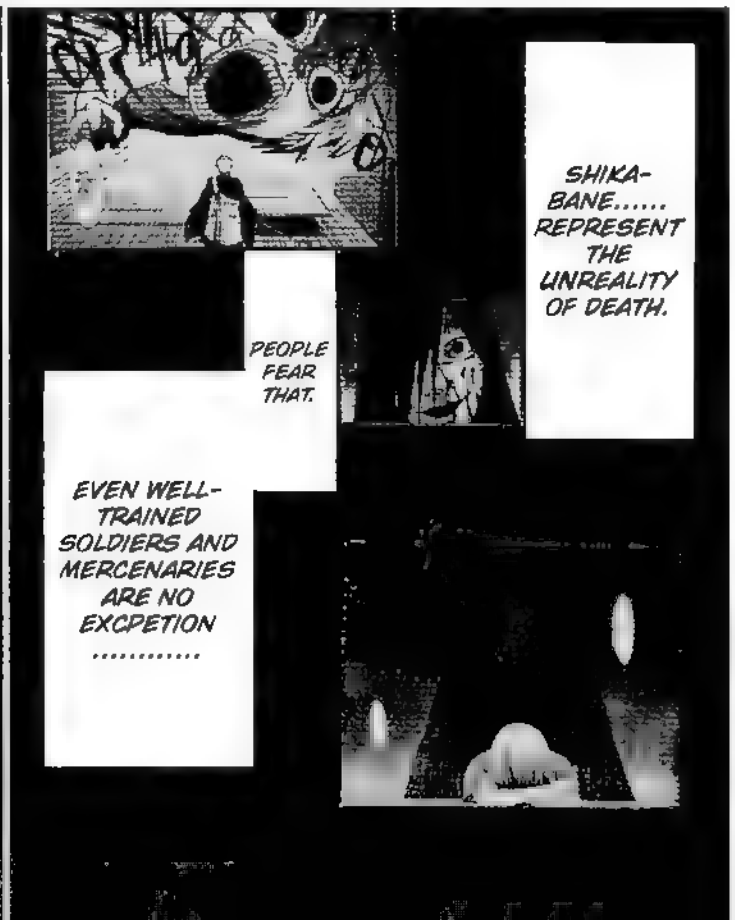

GRACK

DOOM
.....
AH.....
AHH.....
THIS.....
FEELING...
SHUDDER

FEAR IN THE FACE OF A SHIKABANE..... IN THE FACE OF.....DEATH...!!
IT'S "FEAR" .....!!

...IS "INSTINCT SUPPRES-SION."
STRAIN
STRAIN
THIS... IS BAD...
ACK .....
ONE REASON WHY CONTRACTING MONKS AND CORPSE PRINCESSES ARE NEEDED IN ORDER TO KILL SHIKABANE...


AS SUCH ...
...WHEN UP AGAINST BEINGS WHO LIVE OUTSIDE OF REALITY..... ONLY MONKS— WITH THEIR ANTI-DEATH TRAINING— AND THEIR PARTNER CORPSE PRINCESSES CAN DEFEAT SHIKABANE.
HUMANS WHO LIVE IN REALITY CAN'T SUPPRESS THAT INSTINCTUAL FEAR.

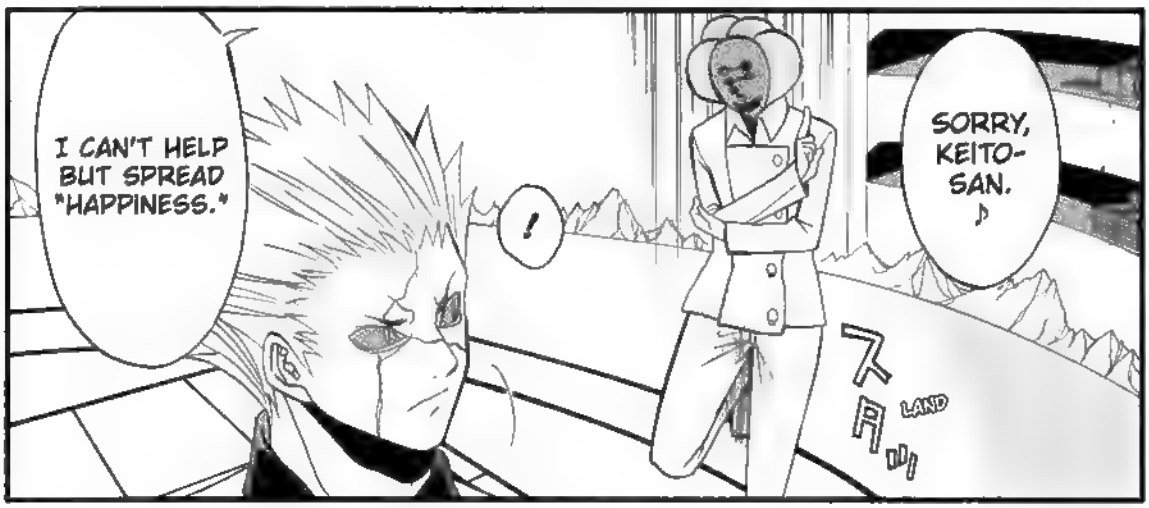

PEOPLE FEAR THAT.
EVEN WELL-TRAINED SOLDIERS AND MERCENARIES ARE NO EXCPETION .....
SHIKA-BANE..... REPRESENT THE UNREALITY OF DEATH.

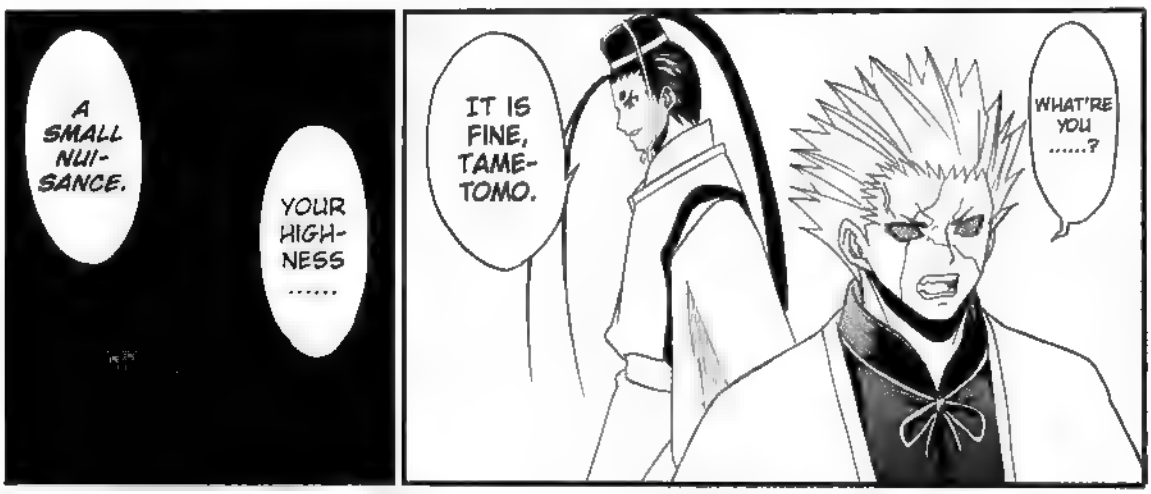
HOW-EVER ...
FOOM
...THIS OVER-WHELMING SENSE OF "DEATH" IS EVEN GETTING TO ME, DESPITE MY TRAINING .....
IT'S LIKE..... A COLD KNIFE IS SLOWLY PIERCING MY HEART .....
MY BODY... CAN'T MOVE .....
HE'S... JUST THAT...
...FEAR..... OF THE SHIKABANE KING...
THIS IS.....

FWIP
!
I..... TSUKI.
.....
WHAT AN HONOR.
WE GET A PROPER AUDIENCE WITH HIS MAJESTY.
LOOK AT THAT..... GUESS WE'RE THE FIRST ONES HERE.
!
KACHAK

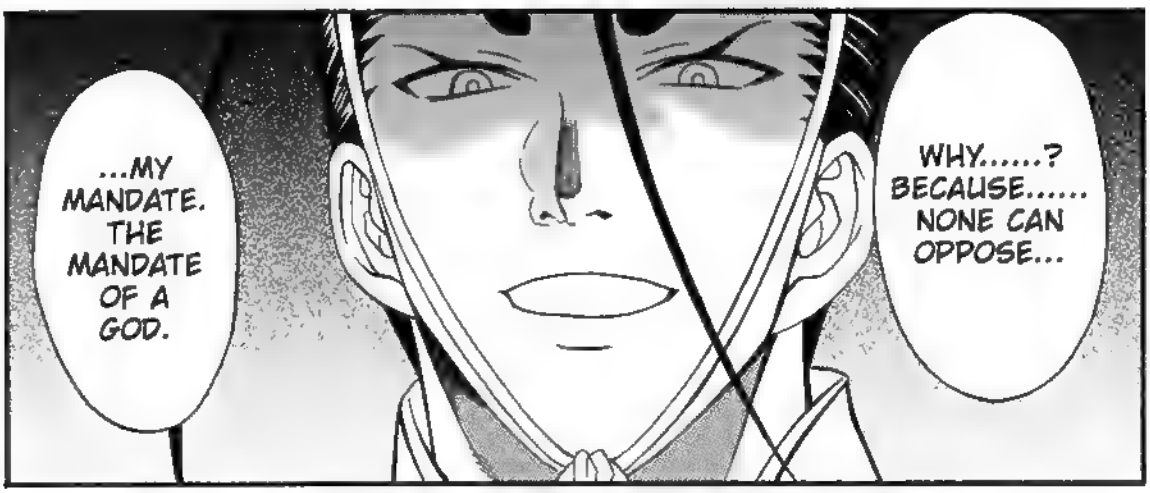
SEVEN STARS .....!!
WHAT'S THE MEANING OF THIS!?
HOW DARE YOU GUIDE THE ENEMY HERE .....?
HMPH!
YOU INSOLENT KOUGON DOGS.
..... AND WAIT ...
KYAHH. SO CUTE.

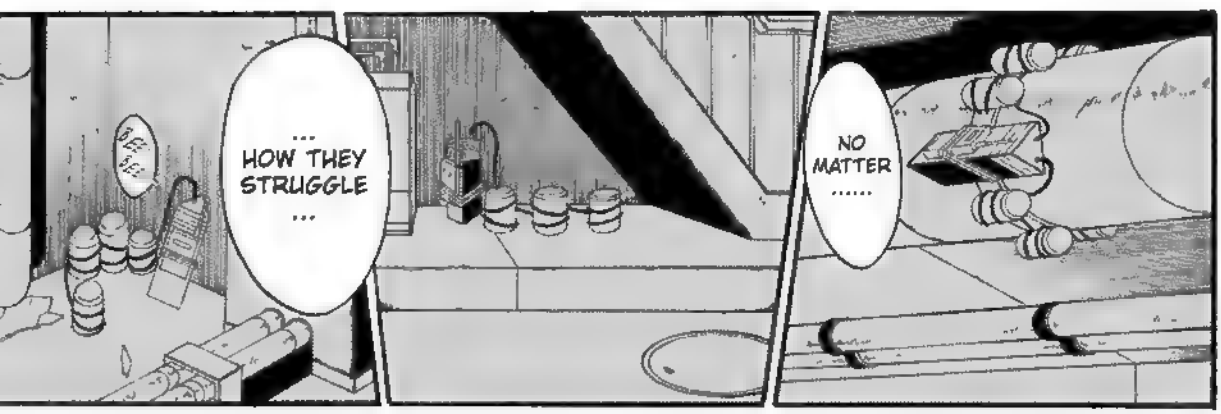
TMP
AH HA.


I CAN'T HELP BUT SPREAD "HAPPINESS."
!
SORRY, KEITO-SAN. ♪
LAND


A SMALL NUI-SANCE.
YOUR HIGH-NESS .....
IT IS FINE, TAME-TOMO.
WHAT'RE YOU .....?

IN THE FACE OF THE TRANS-FORMATION THAT WILL OCCUR THIS EVENING..... THIS TURNING POINT FOR REALITY...
... ALL ELSE IS BUT A SMALL NUISANCE.


...MY MANDATE. THE MANDATE OF A GOD.
WHY.....? BECAUSE..... NONE CAN OPPOSE...


... HOW THEY STRUGGLE ...
NO MATTER .....

BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
!?
EXPLO-SIONS .....!!
HUHH ...!?
BLAM
BLAM
BOOM
BOOM

BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
!?
EXPLO-
SIONS
.....!!
HUHH
...!?
BLAM
BLAM
BOOM

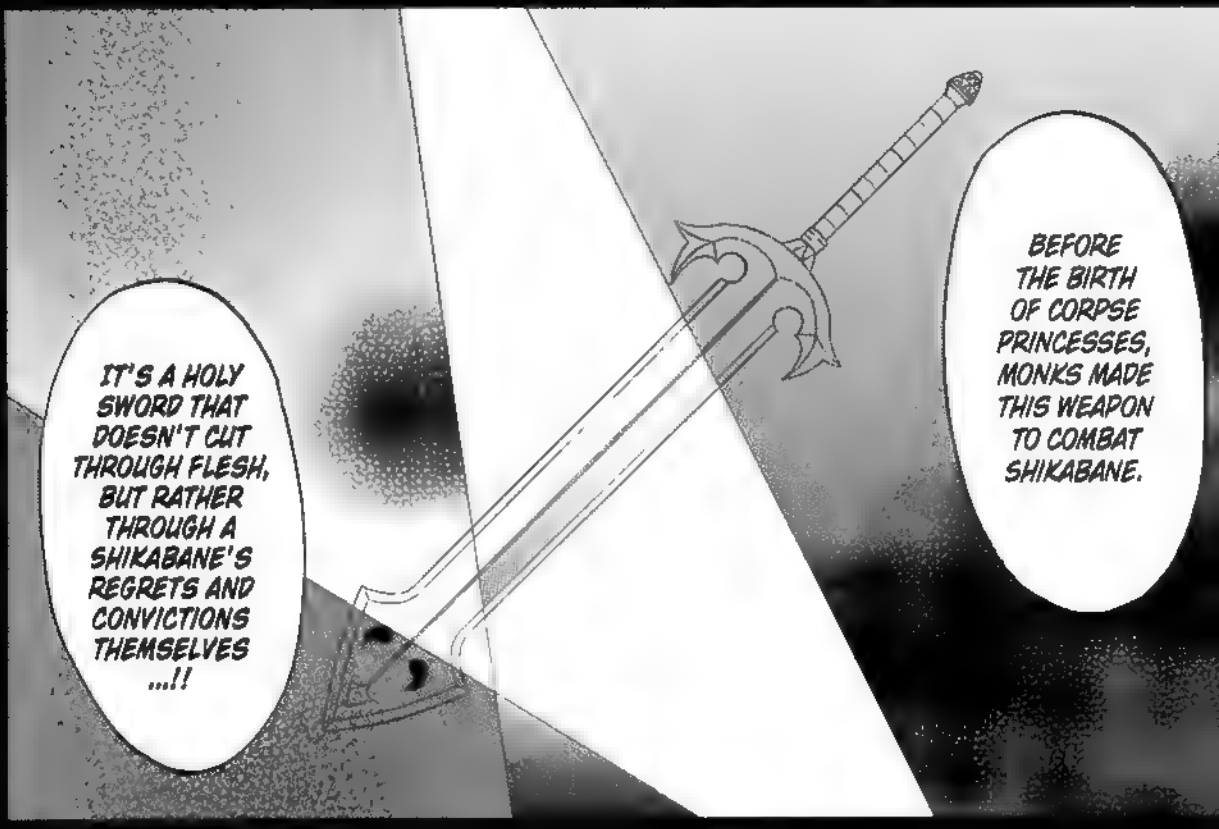
RELEASE !!
SEALED MANDALA—
FWIP
A NUISANCE .....?
VERY WELL, "KING" .....
PULL
SIX REALMS EXORCISM !!!
HOW THE WISDOM OF MAN..... STRUGGLES AGAINST THE CRUELTY OF FATE ...!!
THEN..... LET ME SHOW YOU!!

BOOM
FWOOM
!!
TCH.
THESE FLAMES..... INCENDIARY BOMBS?
TOO MUCH, MAN.
HOW CUNNING ...!!

BLAM
BLAM
CRACK
BOOM
DASH
MAGARI-SAN!! KISARAGI-SAN!!
GOT IT...!!
.....!
RIGHT!

THANK YOU, ITSUKI.
!
THE WAY I WAS GOING...I WOULD'VE BEEN KILLED BEFORE ACCOM-PLISHING ANYTHING .....
RIGHT..... IT'S NOT LIKE CORPSE PRINCESSES DON'T EXPERIENCE FEAR.
.....BUT STILL...
...ITSUKI TOOK THE LEAD AND STOOD TALL.....
YOU SAVED ME.
MM-HM.
SET
.....!
RIGHT!
THE INCENDIARIES ARE STILL IN EFFECT...!
SKID
...BUT..... THE REAL SHOW STARTS NOW.....
EVERYTHING'S GOING SMOOTHLY.....

ONLY IN THIS RANGE
KING
SEAL
ACCORDING TO THE INTEL WE DRAGGED OUT OF THAT BOKOR, THE KING CAN ONLY EXIST WITHIN A SPECIAL SEAL.
IT'S UP TO YOU GUYS TO BLOW UP THAT SEAL.
COMPACT, HIGH-POWERED EXPLOSIVES.
EVERYONE NOT IN MY SQUAD WILL TAKE SOME.
THUMP
OF COURSE..... THAT WON'T BE ENOUGH TO KILL THE KING. IT'LL SHAKE HIM, THOUGH.
SO WHILE HE'S FOCUSING HIS ATTENTION ON THE DIVERSIONS .....
...I'LL COME UP AND USE MY FUDOU MYOU-OU BLADE .....!!
.....
YEAH, YEAH..... WE GET THAT THAT'S THE ULTIMATE RITUAL TOOL, BUT STILL .....
...CAN IT REALLY TAKE OUT THE KING FOR GOOD?
I DOUBT IT.
GYAHH.
HEY!!
KANAE-SAN!!
IT CAN..... PROBABLY.
"PROBABLY"
IF ANYTHING CAN FINISH THE KING OFF, IT'D BE THIS.
!?


BEFORE THE BIRTH OF CORPSE PRINCESSES, MONKS MADE THIS WEAPON TO COMBAT SHIKABANE.
IT'S A HOLY SWORD THAT DOESN'T CUT THROUGH FLESH, BUT RATHER THROUGH A SHIKABANE'S REGRETS AND CONVICTIONS THEMSELVES ...!!

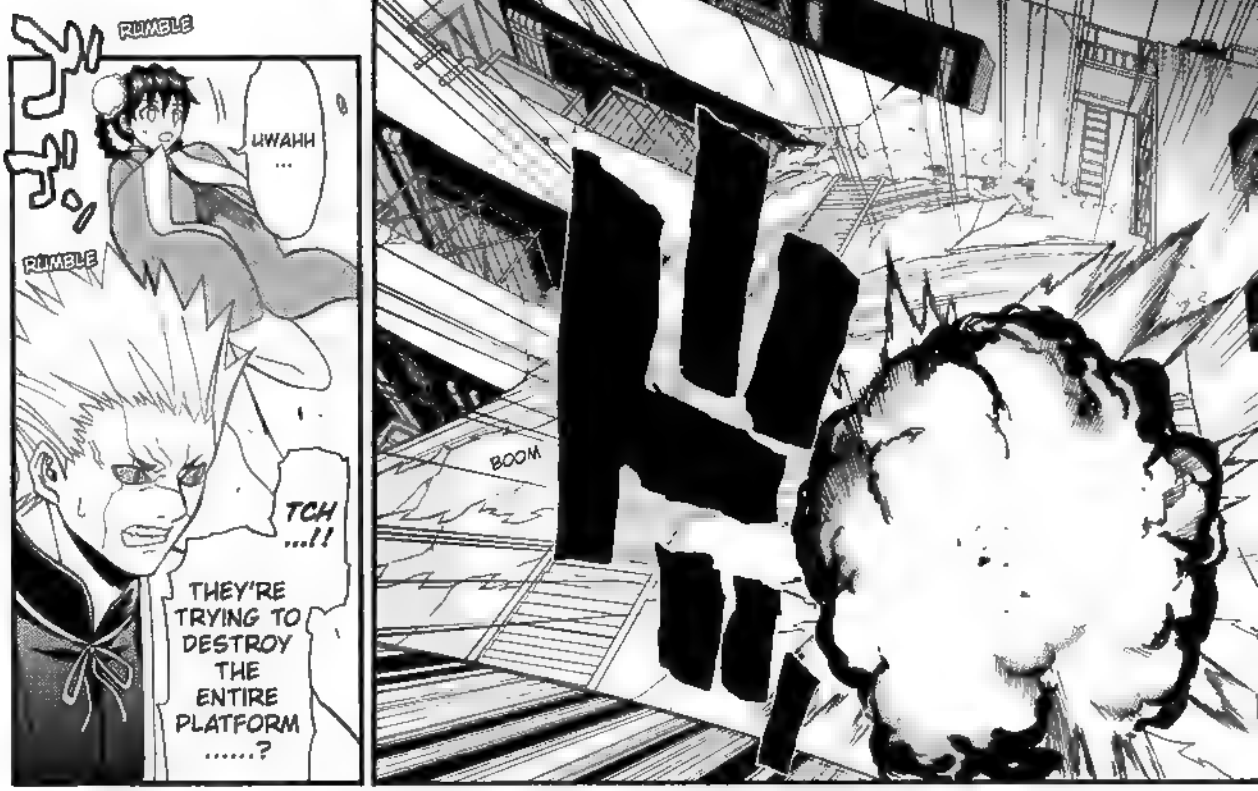
AS OF NOW, THE KING'S REVIVAL IS IMPERFECT..... SO HIS REGRETS AREN'T PROTECTED BY A TOUGH SHIKABANE BODY...!!
NO MATTER HOW STRONG THIS KING IS, DESTROYING HIS REGRETS DIRECTLY WILL MAKE QUICK WORK OF HIM.....I THINK.

.....
SO WE SHOULDN'T WAIT UNTIL YOU GET THERE, SENSEI .....?

EXACTLY .....
BECAUSE YOU NEED TO BE CONVINCING ENOUGH BAIT.

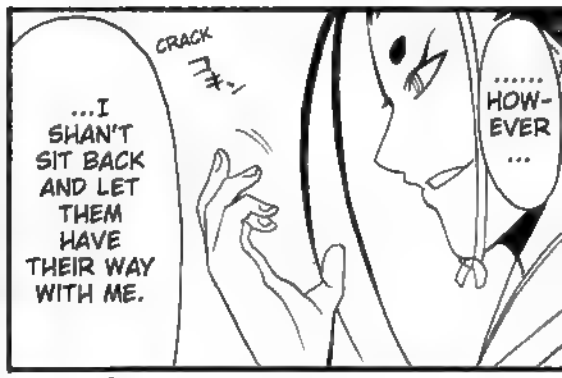
THE BIGGEST HURDLE IN THIS PLAN...
...IS HOW I, A HUMAN, CAN MANAGE TO DELIVER A BLOW WITH THIS.
TO THAT END, I'M GONNA NEED THE DIVERSION SQUADS TO GIVE IT THEIR ALL.

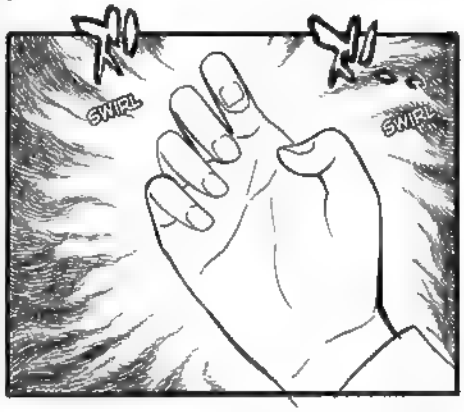
I'LL DEFINITELY GET THERE IN TIME, THOUGH.
NO MATTER WHAT GETS IN MY WAY...


RUMBLE
UWAHH ...
RUMBLE
TCH ...!!
THEY'RE TRYING TO DESTROY THE ENTIRE PLATFORM .....?
BOOM

DO NOT GO AFTER THEM.
IT IS FINE.
YOUR HIGH-NESS ...!!

"CLEANSE."
WHOOSH
SHING


CRACK
...I SHAN'T SIT BACK AND LET THEM HAVE THEIR WAY WITH ME.
..... HOW-EVER ...


SWIRL
SWIRL

FWOOSH

PUFF
IN AN INSTANT .....
... VANISHED ...?

!?
THE FLAMES .....
WHA —...?

BREATHE

BUT HOW ...?
HOW DID HE ...?

"BOW."
!!
THUD
!!?
MY BODY'S... BEING..... TWISTED...
CRACK
CRACK
...BY AN INCREDIBLE FORCE.....
STRAIN
STRAIN
WHAT... THE HELL..... IS THIS...?
WHA—.....!?
TWITCH
KU-WAHH...
.....

RIP
CRICK
CRACK
CLENCH
WOW.
...
THEN YOU WILL BE CRUSHED.
IF YOU RESIST ME.....
WHAT DO YOU SAY, MONKS?
STRAIN
UHH .....
STRAIN
GUH ...!!
THUD
... MASA .....
TAKA .....
SPLURT
TWITCH

STRAIN
STRAIN
STRAIN
STAND
DRIP
DRIP
ITSU... KI...!?
I— .....
... PRO- TECT ...
STRAIN
STRAIN
I'LL .....
STRAIN
... PROTECT... TAKAMASA ...!!
TWINGE
STRAIN
SPLURT
I'LL .....
STRAIN

STEP
STEP
STEP
AHH
AHH
!!
!
WAHH
STRAIN
SPLURT
WITH FLESH RENT AND BONES CRUSHED, YOU STILL ADVANCE?
SWIRL
SWIRL
SUCH DETERMINATION IS ADMIRABLE.
YET ...

Corpse Princess III End

"NONE MAY OPPOSE HEAVEN'S MANDATE. THAT IS ABSOLUTE." SO SAYS MA'EN SUGAMI OF THE UNCLEAN BUNCH. "OPERATION SEALED DEITY" IS THE MISSION TO DEFEAT HIM, BUT EVEN HOPE IS LOST IN THE FACE OF THIS KING'S POWER. TAKAMASA IS DRIVEN TO DESPAIR WHEN FACED WITH OVERWHELMING CALAMITY. MEANWHILE, OURI, MAKINA, SADAHIRO, AND AKASHA ARE BOUND BY THEIR REGRETS OVER KEISEI.

SHIKABANE KILLS NEEDED FOR CORPSE PRINCESS MAKINA HOSHIMURA TO ASCEND TO HEAVEN: 90

12 volume COMING SOON

ERATION SEALED DEITY"

THE GALLANT BUNCH OF KOUGON SECT ELITES WHO MAKE THEIR DEBUT IN THIS VOLUME WERE DESIGNED BY MY WONDERFULLY SUPPORTIVE CORPSE PRINCESS ASSISTANTS IN A COLLECTIVE EFFORT!! SO HERE WE PRESENT TO YOU ALL THE PAIRS, DRAWN BY THE ASSISTANT IN CHARGE OF EACH.

ectors and their Corpse Princesses, drawn by my assistants!!

IN CELEBRATION (?) OF THE START OF "OP

Kougon Sect's elite Prote

CORPSE PRINCESS

SECRET HISTORY BEHIND THE CREATION OF THE SEVEN PROTECTORS
EXCUSE ME... COULD ANY OF YOU HELP ME WITH DESIGNS FOR THE PROTECTORS WHO JOIN OPERATION SEALED DEITY...!? PLEASE...HELP... GAH.
ALL I CAN COME UP WITH ARE WEIRD, LAME-LOOKING GUYS...
I DIDN'T HAVE ENOUGH OF THEM IN THE END, SO I ADDED IN THESE TWO OFF THE CUFF...BUT I ACTUALLY LIKE THIS PARTICULAR PAIR.
SPLORT
.....
(THIS MANGA ARTIST IS A HACK.)
SILENT

AKAHITO YOSHIICHI

SADAHIRO "TENGYOU" MIBU
HEIGHT: 179 CM
WEIGHT: 71 KG
BLOOD TYPE: A
BIRTHDAY: OCTOBER 1
FAVORITE THINGS:
ALCOHOL, VIDEO GAMES, CHILI POWDER
LEAST FAVORITE THINGS:
SWEETS
SPECIAL ABILITY: PROFICIENT IN FOREIGN LANGUAGES (ENGLISH, FRENCH, ITALIAN, GERMAN, HINDI)
AKIRA TOOKA
HEIGHT: 149 CM
WEIGHT: 40 KG
BLOOD TYPE: O
BIRTHDAY: FEBRUARY 20
AGE AT DEATH: 15
FAVORITE THINGS:
CARBONATED DRINKS, PEARS, AUTUMN IN JAPAN
LEAST FAVORITE THINGS:
BEING SLEEPY (HAS LOW BLOOD PRESSURE)
SPECIAL ABILITY: GETTING CHANGED QUICKLY

TRANSLATION NOTES

OVERALL

Japanese Buddhism has a complex ranking system for its monks called *soukan* (*sou* meaning "monk," and *kan* implying hierarchy). Monks in this story often address each other by rank.

PAGE 7

Family graves are the norm in Japan. Ashes of multiple family members (not just husband and wife, necessarily) are added to the grave as they pass away.

PAGE 156

Kodachi are traditional Japanese short blades (typically less than two feet long).

CORPSE PRINCESS 11

Yoshiichi Akahito

Translation: Caleb D. Cook
Lettering: Bianca Pistillo

This book is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents are the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual events, locales, or persons, living or dead, is coincidental.

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